1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

detail. All her work has the indisputable advantage of being a factual record of personal observation of a single hunting band over a period of eight consecutive years. That she is not an anthropologist is to a great extent mitigated by the fact that her record confines itself to her observations, and by the training she received from her husband. Nonetheless this factor should be taken into consideration, particularly as her previous training was as an artist. This accounts in part for the detailed and accurate descriptions of what she saw, but it also accounts for her sometimes highly imaginative presentation of the facts. For instance, when she hears the *molimo* horn at night, she (1954, 84) writes: "Where the Esamba roamed, there went death. Its eerie, lowing voice was the voice of evil." In fact this, as well as being a statement of her own interpretation of the *molimo*, is also an accurate picture of the villager interpretation. It is also significant that she uses specifically village terms, such as "Esamba" (for the more correct *lusumba* or *esumba*). Living as she did among the villagers as well as among the Pygmies, Mrs. Putnam was influenced by many of their notions and not infrequently used the villagers as informants, though she always states when the latter is the case. We must then assume that

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534.
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[P. 157-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[ARCHERS]

There are different types of knives, some hafted, some unhafted, always worn in the belt by women and used for preparing food and for sharpening the pointed sticks used by them in both gathering activities and in cooking. Other items that might be found in or around an Efe archer hut include hunting equipment, such as a bow and quiver of arrows (Figs. 6–9), a dog bell (Fig. 7i), an ax for cutting small saplings and sometimes used in the search for honey, an ivory or wooden beater for barkcloth, clay pipe bowls (Fig. 5), hide slings for carrying children, and a few personal possessions such as hunting charms. Of exceptional interest, perhaps, is the basketry press (Fig. 11), used among the archers for extraction of juice from fruits.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTATION

Clothing consists mainly of barkcloth worn tucked between the legs. The upper part of the body is rarely covered, and then only by a skin cape worn over the shoulders by old men. Basketry caps are worn by men, and sometimes fur bands which may also be worn on the arm. Schebesta also mentions bracelets of shredded bark. Both men and women may wear, around the upper arm or wrist, fiber cords to which small pieces of wood, teeth, and other charms are attached. Leaves, flowers, nuts, and feathers

[P.167–D]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 168-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P.169-A]

barks. The preparation of the dyes and the painting of the geometric designs are a woman's art.

Care of Body

515 Schebesta says that bodily care is very much neglected among the Mbuti. He agrees with and quotes Stuhlmann (1894) who writes that the Pygmies are exceptionally dirty and are afraid of water. Schebesta also mentions the fondness of the Mbuti for rubbing oil into the skin.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The hunting dog (F.fe: *ebó*) is the sole domestic animal. Schebesta says that all Mbuti maintain hunting dogs, bought from villagers or acquired by trade. These dogs are mute; hence the need for dog bells, made by the Pygmies themselves and hung around the dog's neck (Fig. 7i).

[ARCHERS]

[P.171-A]

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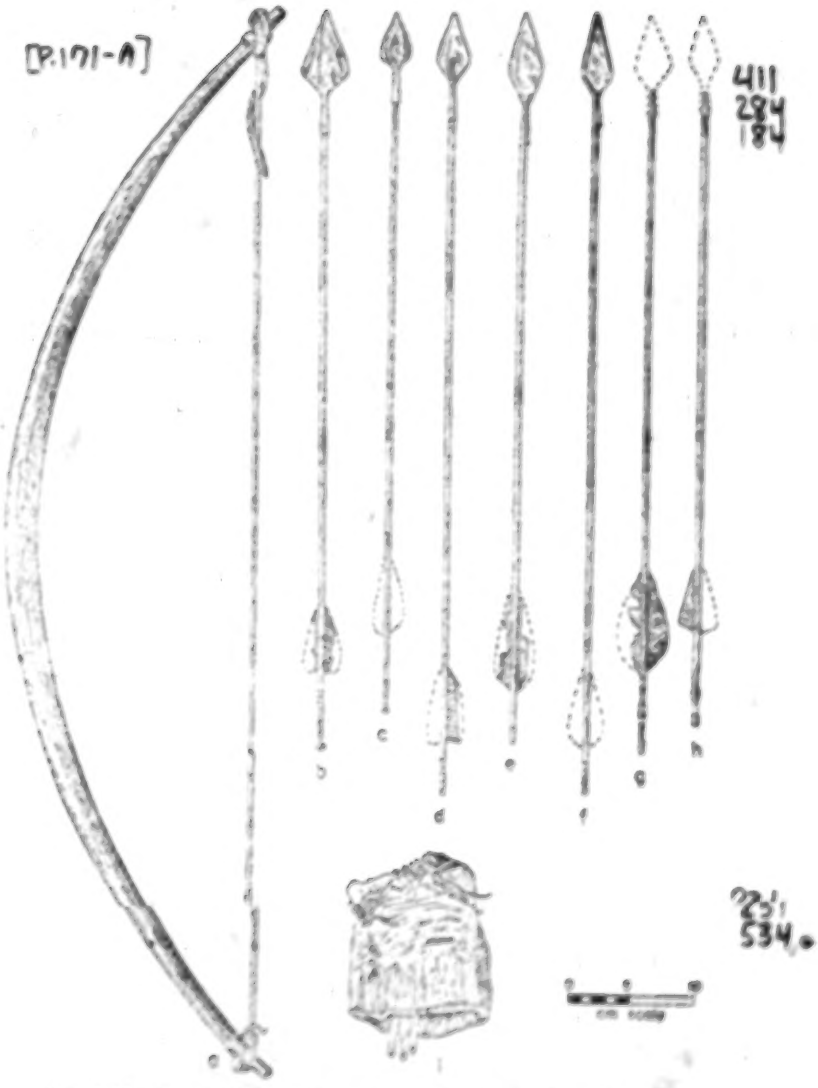

FIG. 7. Hunting equipment of a western archer from Ndaye District, Central Ituri. a, Bow. b–h, Arrows. i, Dog bell.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

The candidates, Mbuti and villager, are led before the operator and are, if brave enough, circumcised standing up; otherwise, they are laid on the ground and held down. Next to every Lese youth stands a Pygmy boy, who is circumcised immediately after him. The two enter into a lasting bond of *karé* brotherhood. As the circumcision is completed, the Lese blows his signal horn, and the Mbuti his *seghe* pipe. The women in the village hear this and reply with a shout of joy at this sign that their sons have now become men. By this joint ceremony the *karé* stand in an even closer relationship to each other than do blood brothers.

Schebesta gives little account of the ensuing instruction, though he mentions the brutality with which he says the initiates are treated in the camp. Food is brought by the mothers and left nearby; the elders from the camp go to collect it. The boys are cut off from any comfort they might be given by their mothers. Instruction, "partly social, partly moral" (Schebesta, 1948, 481) may be given by the lineage head himself or by one of the other elders.

The major aspects of the *nkumbi*, from Schebesta's account, seem to be the formal transition from boyhood to manhood, the establishment of a *karé* relationship between Mbuti and villagers, and the introduction of all the initiates for the first time to a special trumpet that plays an important part in the men's secret

[P. 179-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

P [P, 180-A]
Z society. Schebesta also mentions other instru-
881 ments particularly associated with *nkumbi* (and
177 the secret society) among the south Lese,
608 namely: the bull-roarer (*pahudjuhudju* or
534 *hudjuhudju*); a flute (*likuru*); a singing pot
(*pengi*); and the large wooden trumpet (*asa-
ragba*). The invitation to the Mbuti to take part
Z [563] in the *nkumbi* is one of the ways in which the
villagers seek to maintain and extend their
control over the Pygmies.

Z Schebesta concludes that we must distinguish
P two elements in the *nkumbi*: the villager ele-
881 ment of initiation associated with circumcision
177 and, quite distinct from it, the Pygmy element
P of initiation into the men's secret society (*soré*).
[578]

Marriage

P Schebesta (1948, 343) writes that it is difficult
581 to determine which is the stronger, the interests
584 of the hunting band or the interests and mutual
621 affection of the two individuals concerned.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

The *toré* society, however, widens the field of Mbuti social contact because it embraces, according to Schebesta (1948, 492 ff.), villagers and Pygmies throughout the Ituri, being basically the same as other societies going under different names, such as *anyoto*, *nebeli*, *molimo*, and *lusomba* (the latter two among the Bira-Sua). The common denominator of all these societies is the common belief in the bush demon, the divinity of the Mbuti hunters. The *toré* society, as seen by Schebesta, is thus the origin of similar villager societies in the district. It has a particular significance for the Mbuti who claim it as their own.

Although women are normally excluded, the Mbuti, says Schebesta, admit aged women. The villagers admit only one old woman who is charged with the duty of cooking for the men. Further, he says, the society terrifies the villager women (cf. Anne Putnam) which is not the case with the Mbuti. The society always meets outside the village, in the bush or in a remote, dark area of the forest. Schebesta (1948, 498) witnessed no exclusively Mbuti meeting of the *toré* society, only mixed Mbuti and villager, and exclusively villager, meetings.

The meeting place contains the hut of *toré*, in which are kept the musical instruments used during the ceremonies and on the march. The number and type of these instruments vary, says Schebesta, the commonest being a long trumpet made of wood, slightly curved, some-

[P 183-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

[CP.184-A]

times called *lusomba* in Schebesta's account. All these instruments, he claims, however, produce sounds in imitation of the leopard. The archers do not carry the tattoo marks, such as those worn by the Bira-Sua, which resemble marks of a leopard's claw.

A further inquiry made among the archers in 1949 confirmed these observations (Schebesta, 1952, 279) and added some supplementary facts. The *toré* hut is to be found near or in the camp itself. Women and children may attend the *toré* ceremonies organized by the men. The "presidents" are an old man and an old woman. The meetings are held in honor of Kalisia, God of the Bush, who is, during the ceremony, implored for help in the hunt. The society, Schebesta concludes, has a religious aspect. This same study revealed the use of three wooden trumpets (*apadia*); a "sonorous pot" (*bodzo*), in fact a large clay vessel, and the tube through which the performer sings into it (*iuma*); and three small whistles (*ilitodo*).

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

[P.184-C]

society is to take place, any raiding of the plantations of village women that is proposed is made known to the villagers in advance, and meat is offered in exchange.

Schebesta (1948, 501 ff.) gives a detailed description of a joint village-Mbuti *toré* ceremony. At about 10 o'clock at night, announced by blasts on the trumpet, a procession of some 20 men, villagers, and Mbuti, entered the village, dancing wildly. The Pygmies (as always) were the musicians and blew into three sonorous clay pots of different sizes, the largest being called "mother" and the others "children." The largest pot contained just enough water to cover the bottom, into which a pipe was thrust. Some sang; others made weird noises by holding their noses.[1] In the morning the procession left for the Pygmy camp, two hours away. Before they passed through small village hamlets, someone was sent ahead to warn the inhabitants who had not heard the approaching blasts of the long wooden horn; women and children fled to the shelter of their huts as the procession went by. In one village a woman who remained in sight was threatened and made to give a chicken in payment for her release. On nearing the Pygmy camp, the trumpet was hidden in the brush, and the musicians took another path. The main procession entered the camp, where there were only a few old men and their wives.

1: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies
Mbuti
Bira FO11

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FIG. 15. Miscellaneous items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Comb. b-c. Notched flutes. These luxuries are not an essential part of hunting life but seem to be gradually becoming more common.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P. 190-A]

782 God of the Undergrowth in the form of invoca-
776 tions, offerings, propitiatory sacrifice, and perhaps also a number of the practices of the *toré* association. There is no cult to any celestial divinity, of which the Mbuti have only vague notions.

782 Invocations usually concern the weather (re-
82 quests for a storm to pass over speedily or to be
372 diverted) and are often accompanied by the
• 534 blowing of the *segbe* magic pipe, indicating with the arm the direction the storm should take. The archers also may light a special fire and cover it with leaves so that a thick smoke rises. The God of the Undergrowth sees the smoke, smells its fragrance, and hears the *segbe* pipes. His attention is thus drawn to the plight of his
782 "children." There is a similar ritual of fire and
224 smoke in connection with the hunt, particularly
372 the apparently ancient *begbe* beat hunt, as is mentioned above (p. 172). Invocations frequently use the term "father" or "grandfather."

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.203-C]

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FIG. 35. Magic whistle, ***mamambamamba***, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Such magic is rare, though pipes and whistles are sometimes blown before a hunt in the belief that the sound will attract game.

ting up the nets, with a special vocabulary of technical terms to deal with it, but he does not give the details. 224

When all is ready, the women, who have spread out in an opposing semicircle, start beating into the nets, calling and shouting, beating their sticks on the ground. If they see any slow game heading their way, they dive for it and

I: Turnbull F-4.8 (1951-1958) 1968 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P 210-A]

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222

[534]

FIG. 43. Gathering equipment, net hunters. a. Bark honey container, *chimba*, Epulu District, Central Ituri. b. Vine-and-leaf honey container, *apayahisi*, West Nduye District, Central Ituri. Normally the bark container is used, but if the Mbuti come across honey unexpectedly, they improvise a container of leaves supported by vine strands. This may be found among both archers and net hunters. c-d. Clappers, *ngiengbe*, used exclusively by the Mbuti during the honey season to accompany honey songs, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

[824]
[84]
[84]
[534]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

In the left hand they carry a smouldering log end wrapped in a phrynium leaf, and they may also carry a baby on the left hip in a sling. Special utensils of Mbuti origin include a bark container (Fig. 32a) sealed with *kasuku* resin, and a fragile vine basket lined with leaves (Fig. 43b). Hardwood rhythm sticks, *ngbengbe* (Fig. 43c), are cut and used during the honey season.

222 [372] [854] [415] [534]

Drinks, Narcotics, and Stimulants

276 [184]

The information available is exactly the same as that given by Schebesta for the archers. Pipestems and bowls are borrowed from vil-

[P 210-C]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

Games and pastimes are the same as those for the archers, with the addition of a form of spear practice. A large forest fruit is fixed to the end of a vine which is swung around in a circle. Men standing in a group surrounding the swinger throw their spears as the fruit comes past them, dashing in to retrieve the weapons that miss. 526 [84]

Legend telling, like dance and song, is an important medium of expression as well as recreation. Instrumental music among this group of Mbuti is virtually nil. In a hunting camp a *lukembi* (*sanza*) may be heard, a musical bow, and possibly, though rarely, a notched flute. If the camp is near a village the men may borrow or steal a drum for the dance; otherwise, they use sticks as clappers, either shaved at the end to give a flat sound, or left smooth to give a sharp, hollow sound. The women add to the rhythm with handclaps, and both sexes with stampings of the feet. 538 534 533

There are two kinds of secular dance, erotic and imitative, as described by Schebesta. The third kind of dance described for the archers, [P 212-D] 535 [331] [372] [84]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.215]

FIG. 48. Twa, net hunters, Fipa'u District, Central Ituri. a. Spear, *ekenge*. b. Fire spear, *imakamahoti*. c. Castanets, *kolokhenio*. d. Top, *teniya*. e. Baby sling, *kuke*. f. Bark beater, *kalea*. g–h. Seed whistles, *pio'u*. i. Wrist protector, *arube*. j. Basket. k. l. Bow, *manze*, and arrow, *epi*.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 217-C]

comparison with the *nkumbi* as described by Schebesta for the archers.

In the Epulu region the *nkumbi* takes place every three years. It is organized and conducted throughout by the villagers, who invite the Mbuti to take part. The first part of the year, from the dry season onward, is considered most suitable. On this particular occasion there were no village boys of the right age, but the villagers (Bira and Ndaka) went ahead with the arrangements as usual. The fact that only Pygmy boys were to be initiated made no difference to the celebrations, which were conducted in the village with full enthusiasm, bringing villagers from as far as 50 miles away. Villagers allowed themselves to be beaten with long sapling whips (Fig. 46) "to give strength" to the Mbuti candidates.

After a week of preliminary festivities, on the day of the first circumcision, the *makata* sticks (a set of eight or nine resonant sticks tuned to a specific scale) were cut and sounded. The *makata* are heard only during a period of initiation and are destroyed simultaneously with the initiation camp at the end of the festival. Villagers and Pygmies joined in a dance with the *makata*, while others went into the forest a short distance to make a clearing for the initiation camp.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

Further, unlike the initiation described by Schebesta, the *molimo* (Schebesta: *lusomba*) trumpet did not appear during the entire festival, nor was it mentioned. The initiation here seems to be almost completely dissociated from the men's religious association, at least as far as the Mbuti are concerned. The only instruments that were used were the *makata* sticks, small clappers used by the women in their dances during this period, and a bull-roarer (which the boys knew about, though in front of the villagers they pretended otherwise). There was nothing at any time in the ceremony itself, or in the instruction, to connect the *nkumbi* with the Mbuti *molimo* society. Toward the end of the initiation the boys were dressed in grass skirts (Fig. 47) and paraded through the village with leaf masks (Fig. 48b) held between their teeth to prevent them from talking to non-initiates. After the final cere-

[P 218-C]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 219-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.225-A]

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FIG. 51. Magical paraphernalia, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Pipe, *akbelea*, attached to fur headband; worn by a few net hunters, the pipe sometimes being blown before they [237] set out on a hunt. b. Wooden whistle, *angbelu*. c. Antelope horn, [228] *anjo*, used to carry paste sometimes smeared on the face to heighten the senses of smell, sound, and sight. d. Honey whistle, [222] *madi*, used during the honey season for "calling" the honey. e. Honey whistle, *madi*. f. Hunting whistle, *manyongi*, found in northwest area; stuck in the ground near a special hunting fire in the camp and pointing in the direction in which the hunt has gone.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

575 561 88 [554] [224] to status in the band and the fact that young men, as yet unmarried, who have displayed particular prowess as hunters may take a prominent part in *molimo* activities. In the absence of any detailed information on formal initiation into the *molimo*, we can at least say with some certainty, from the available material, that among the net hunters membership is associated primarily with hunting skill.

575 796 With regard to the proceedings of the association, all reports from this district indicate that the *molimo* is held only on occasions of the greatest importance to the community: various crises, and particularly death. A fuller account is given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1960b, 307–340); a summary is given here.

534 [192] The word *molimo* is used to denote the association, its proceedings, and a musical instrument. Only one instrument is reported by the Putnams as being used—the *molimo* trumpet. But Anne Putnam, in her notes, mentions having heard the trumpet one night and thinking that it sounded very different from the one she had heard some months previously. It is possi-

[P 225-8]

Jr Turnbull E-4. 5 (1961-1965) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ble then that there may be different types of instrument, but evidently not used in conjunction. Anne Putnam further mentions having heard sounds that she took to be animal sounds but that may in fact have been singing pots as described by Schebesta (1952, 279). The only instrument that she or her husband mentions, however, is the trumpet, and no description of it is given. 534 •

This instrument is an essential part of the proceedings; its use marks the difference between two grades of *molimo* meeting. A meeting in which the trumpet is not used does not carry the significance that one with the trumpet does. There is no information as to exactly when it is used and when not, but it is recorded that the trumpet is heard during meetings following death, during serious illness, or during some crisis affecting the welfare of the band as a whole. It is frequently associated with song, accompanied by split-stick clappers, *hanja* (Fig. 52) that are apparently peculiar to the *molimo*. 534 575 796 [533]

A third grade of meeting is that from which women and children are not excluded, during 533 575 796 [P 225-C]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]
[P.226-A]
• 534

FIG. 52. Split clappers, *banja*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

533 which *molimo* songs may or may not be sung.
535 Such a meeting may be said to be religious, in
that it is known by all that the songs effect
[176] some kind of communion with the God of the Forest, but they are not held with any specific purpose. After an evening meal the men sit together around the main fire, talking and smoking. The subject of conversation may take a serious turn, or there may simply be a long silence during which one or another of the men starts singing. In either case someone quite spontaneously starts singing a *molimo* song, and the others join in. At such times the women and children remain sitting, as is their habit, around their individual fires outside their huts; they

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

533 575 796 are not expected to retire to their huts. Only if the singing develops a certain turn do they retreat. They know that certain songs have more significance than others, and, on hearing these, they retire. It is unusual, however, for an ordinary meeting of the men to develop to this extent.

575 533 534 796 Usually the trumpet is heard at about the time the band normally retires for the night. The women in any case have been aware of whatever crisis is the occasion for the meeting and are prepared for it. On hearing the trumpet, they take their children and shut themselves in their huts. None will come out, even to cross the clearing. The men sit close together around one of the fires. As they sing, the *molimo* trumpet echoes their song, sometimes coming close, sometimes going far away into the forest. The *molimo* may come right into the camp itself and install itself, unseen, close to where the men are [535] sitting. At a given point the men may suddenly start dancing through the fire, scattering the ashes and cinders to all sides. Shortly afterwards the participants go to bed. The singing may last only two or three hours, or may con-

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 226-C]

tinue until first light, according to the Putnam material. Once a meeting is begun, it may continue nightly for as long as a month. It is obligatory for all members to attend, and those who are away visiting return to take part. Visitors in the camp also take part if they qualify as hunters. Men, and more particularly youths, sometimes improvise headdresses of cane and feathers (Fig. 50), similar to those worn by village men and women during initiation festivities. Putnam says that food may be prepared for the men by a woman (it is not known who), but that she never appears and has no other function in the proceedings.

In my own experience the words of the songs that are sung by the *molimo* are not supplicatory but are mainly repetitions of one or other of the names of the God of the Forest, or affirmations of his goodness and omnipotence. The songs are, nonetheless, effective means, as far as the Mbuti are concerned, of securing an end to the crisis. The purpose of these meetings is undoubtedly to restore the normality to a community which in some way or another has deviated.

1: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

There is, however, some evidence that indicates another usage of the *molimo* society, more in accord with Schebesta's interpretation of its social function. Anne Putnam reports having once been in a hunting camp when there was some commotion, fairly early in the evening, and the women shouted that the *molimo* was coming. All the women and children promptly fled to their huts and shut themselves in, with much loud complaining. Shortly afterward, the trumpet was heard in the distance and then, closer at hand, the sound of a chicken being killed, which evidently called forth a renewed burst of anger from the women. The men in the camp started singing, and the women became quiet. The singing lasted until nearly dawn. In the morning it was explained to Mrs. Putnam that the *molimo* had taken a chicken and would not pay. "But that is the way of the *molimo*," explained her male informant.

That evening a basket appeared in the camp, hung up in a prominent place, filled with plantains—a gift for the *molimo*. Members were able to help themselves from the basket, and the women were expected to keep it filled. After all the women had gone to bed, the men started singing, although they had said that they were not going to sing that night. As the singing

[P. 226 - D]

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P 229-A]

reached a climax (drums were being used, unusual for a religious meeting of the *molimo*), the trumpet arrived. Anne Putnam heard one of the hunters say, "We shall give the *molimo* a present tonight." Another said that there was nothing to give. Then one of the more important but younger hunters said, "We'll give it water." At this point Anne Putnam looked out and saw water being thrown over a figure that seemed to be white and that was playing the trumpet. The figure did not flinch and continued playing, while the hunter who suggested throwing the water laughed. Shortly afterward the trumpet left, and the men sang without the drums before going to bed.

During this same meeting of the *molimo*, the basket was kept filled with food for the men of the association. The singing went on each night, sometimes with drums, sometimes without. On some occasions the singing, particularly when there were no drums, appears to have been serious. At other times the meeting seems to have been more in the nature of a joke, as in the case of the water throwing, and on another occasion when the *molimo* kept moving about in the bush

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

575 and refused to come to the camp. Some of the
533 men tried to find it, but, as they went after it,
534 it stayed silent for a while, then suddenly was
782 heard on the other side of the camp.
796 Anne Putnam gives one other instance of this kind of meeting. While the evening meal was being eaten, the trumpet was heard and all the women had to shut themselves up. The trumpet approached the camp, and the men ran out to greet it, shouting and beating the drums. The trumpet came right into the clearing. Mrs. Putnam heard much shouting, drumming, hunting cries, and swishing of branches. The trumpet made a quick tour of the circle of huts and was then heard to disappear into the distance. The women were called out. The men were busy
[823] dancing. The women cooked a large meal, and the men all drank salt water so that they would sing well. They sang until about midnight. The trumpet was heard again for a short time early in the morning, in the distance.

575 The occasion for this *molimo* meeting, which
533 lasted about a month, was poor hunting. How-
765 ever, an old woman died during the month.
796 Anne Putnam was told that if the *molimo* had not already been meeting, they would have had to call it out for this occasion. They also explained that the woman's death was the reason

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.227-C]

for the particularly long and intense singing at that time.

I myself witnessed only one such meeting of the *molimo*,[1] the occasion for which was not clear and which took place down near the village. One villager took part. The trumpet and the performer, covered with a cloth, were carried in from the forest on a crude litter and disappeared behind one of the huts. As the playing and singing proceeded, the villager and one or two Mbuti danced around the camp, tearing leaves off the roofs of huts and placing them against the door of the hut behind which the trumpet was playing. There was much laughter, but everyone spoke in low tones. Finally, the player and trumpet were carried away as they arrived, and everyone went to bed.

The other meetings of the *molimo* that I have witnessed were of the more serious kind, following the general disruption in the district among villagers and Mbuti alike when Patrick Putnam died. At these meetings no drums were used, even though they were sometimes available. But even at such meetings there was generally a period, early in the night, during which the men started singing a *molimo* song that mocked the womenfolk, accompanied by a mildly obscene dance around the fire, with much laugh-

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

ter. During this time the food was being cooked, and the women were still chattering, though shut up in their huts. After eating, and when all the women were silent, the serious singing began.

Final mention should be made of the coincidence of an *elima* initiation and a *molimo* meeting, described by Anne Putnam. It is the custom of the *elima* to sing through the night, as do the boys of the initiation during the *nkumòi*. When the women once found themselves rivaled by some men singing the "hunting" *molimo*, they competed but were sung down and finally gave up. As soon as the sounds of the *molimo* trumpet died into the distance, however, the women started up again. When it was a case of death, and serious *molimo* singing, the women offered no competition.

It is told by these Mbuti that in the old days the *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the women, and all the men had to run away every time they saw it. But then the men caught the

[1] Subsequently I saw many more meetings of the *molimo* association (1960b, 1961) and its two different aspects were clarified and reconciled.

[P 227-D]

I: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

173 [p.229-A]
534 animal and since then no woman has been al-
825 lowed to see it.
562 Local villagers, who claim also to have the
171 *molimo*, are critical of the occasional joking at-
177 titude of the Mbuti and say that they, the vil-
534 lagers, call it out only when someone important has died.

POLITICAL LIFE

Authority

622 Putnam goes further than Schebesta with re-
888 gard to the existence or non-existence of chief-
tainship among the Mbuti. Primarily of the net
[623] hunters he writes, "... there are no chiefs, councils, or any other formal governing bodies in a pygmy camp" (Putnam, 1948, 334). There is respect, he says, for age and experience (*not* for "elders"); the opinions of the old and the wise are generally heeded. Any individual who shows disrespect for an old man, or who refuses to comply with any reasonable request, is abused by the others. Old men who are eccentrics are ignored.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

534 Normally, however, and when drums are not available, short resonant sticks are used. These are either smooth, giving a sharp hollow sound, or else they are split and shaved at one end to provide a totally different accompaniment. These sticks, handclaps, and leg stampings provide the rhythmic background to the dance.[1]

535 224 825 Mrs. Putnam has seen a dance in which a mask made from a leopard skin was used by the Mbuti. She also describes fully (1954, 296 ff.) a dance performed by them following the killing of a leopard. The body of the leopard is strung up to a branch or a tall stake. All the men, armed with liana whips and whips made from plaited antelope hide, gather around it. The men who are responsible for killing the leopard dance by themselves, approaching the stake. As they do so, they are attacked by the others, and have to fight their way to the leopard's body and cut it down, at which everyone gives a shout of triumph. In the

[1] It is most notable that for religious song and dance such is the only form of accompaniment, even if drums are available.

[P. 234-B]

Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

religious association (*molimo*) and of the women's religious association (*elima*); songs of the men's main economic activity (hunting) and of the women's (gathering). It is perhaps not quite justifiable to make the subdivision according to sex, as, in hunting and gathering among the net hunters, both sexes hunt. Most of the gathering songs concern honey gathering which is primarily a male occupation. Nor, in fact, does the classification into sacred and secular stand up to full scrutiny, as, in a sense, all songs are sacred as all are related to forest activities and the forest itself is sacred (pp. 258–259).

Unlike the archers, the net-hunting Mbuti make extremely little use of musical instruments of any kind, except for the resonant sticks used in accompaniment to their forest songs. For one thing, a truly nomadic group with only the most basic means of locomotion and transport, namely, the human body, can hardly afford to accumulate possessions beyond the absolute necessities—even less so with bulky nets as an additional item to be carried when camp is moved. Some net hunters know how to make and play notched end-blown flutes, with even greater skill and precision than the neighboring villagers, but they are rarely made. A *lukembi* (*sanza*) is the only instrument

[P. 234-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]
[P. 235-A]

534 that a Pygmy would think of carrying with him, as it is light, portable, and most easily concealed from the villagers from whom he probably stole it. There is no record that the net hunters make any instruments other than the flute and the resonant sticks, and possibly a special musical bow which is made just as is their hunting bow but larger and with a larger section of vine as the "string." Ordinary hunting bows are sometimes used as musical bows.

533 From the material on net hunters it seems that music is virtually exclusively vocal and that, apart from lullabies and some play songs, song involves chorus rather than solo work. Men and women join in song; sometimes they merely double each other's parts (as in the "secular" songs); at other times each takes different and complementary parts (*elima* songs). Certain *elima* songs and all *molimo* songs are sung only by adult women and men, respectively.

533 Merriam (1953), in an examination of music
191 from the Congo and Rwanda, writes that Congo music has four main characteristics: (1) lack of emphasis on percussion; (2) variety of instruments and styles; (3) heavy Arabic influence; and (4) considerable change currently in process.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

531 This account of music among the villagers in
191 the Ituri Forest region is certainly accurate. In
contrast, the music of the Mbuti differs on each
533 one of these four points. Though the music of
191 the Mbuti of the Epulu District is here specifi-
184 cally considered, it appears from all the known
material, including Schebesta's work on the
archers and other Pygmy groups, that there is
remarkable uniformity of music among African
Pygmies, not confined to the Ituri or even the
533 Congo. Even in the absence of drums, extreme
• 534 percussive effects are obtained by resonant
184 sticks, handclaps, and foot stamps; some vocal
effects achieved by the Mbuti might also
[M] properly be described as percussive. As noted,
there is a lack of interest in instrumental
music, and styles are formalized; there is no
Arabic influence at all; there is no evidence
concerning change, except that up to now the
Mbuti have managed to preserve their dis-
tinctive musical form in the face of strong
influences from all sides, which would seem to
indicate resistance to change.

53 As with the archers, song and dance both
overlap into the field of drama, and of the

[P. 235-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

formed. Mrs. Putnam says that the Pygmies may ask the villager to perform the ceremony, but it is also certain that the villagers themselves, if they do not get enough meat from the Pygmies, insist on performing it. The use of a *segbe* whistle is mentioned only once by Patrick Putnam. It was incorporated in a hunting net (Figs. 34–35) for the hunter to blow into to attract the antelope. This hunter was the camp joker. *Segbe* whistles and pipes may assume many forms, being incorporated in fur headbands (Fig. 51a) or left loose (Fig. 51b). Other hunting magic found among the net hunters, not mentioned by Putnam, is *anjo* (Fig. 51c), an antelope horn in which is kept a paste made of animal parts, rubbed over the eyes and head of the hunter before the hunt.

Segbe are not to be confused with *madé* (Fig. 51d–e) pipes, which are used only during the honey season.

Rain magic involves the covering of the campfires with leaves but evidently without much faith in the efficacy of this action, as all practical precautions are taken as well, such as putting hunting nets under cover, bringing fire inside the huts, and taking in barkcloth that has been left outside to dry. Further, the use of

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P. 254-C]

conversation among the *ganza* at night and in their constant burlesque.

Schebesta (1948, 508–510) says that, for the archers, the *toré* association has both social and religious functions and that membership is common to both villagers and Pygmies through the *nkumbi* initiation. Among the net hunters the term *molimo* is used instead of the term *toré*, and among the Bira villagers the word has apparently similar usage. Thus the *molimo* horn is an instrument that is sacred to both villagers and Mbuti. The villager *molimo* normally makes itself heard during the *nkumbi*, when the young initiates are introduced to it for the first time. It made no appearance at all during the all-Pygmy 1954 *nkumbi*. Evidently it was unable to appear as there were no villager boys among the *ganza*, and the villager *molimo* has a distinct totemic aspect that excludes the Mbuti. Yet for the Mbuti, in particular, the instrument is associated with their most profound magico-religious concepts, and it is inconceivable that they should regard the *nkumbi* as initiation into their own religious society without the inclusion of their version of the *molimo* horn.

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881
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778
534 •

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The primary purpose of the *molimo* for the Pygmies is to maintain and to restore normality in the forest. (We must ignore its possible social function at the moment because of insufficient information.) It fulfills its purpose through song and by the use of the *molimo* horn. The association may meet informally any evening as the men sit around the main campfire. They may sing *molimo* songs as well as hunting songs, but the horn will not be heard. Women and children are not excluded from the group, though, as is their normal habit, they usually keep to their own individual firesides. The association meets formally following any crisis such as death, serious illness, or exceptionally poor hunting. Women and children are then rigidly excluded, and the *molimo* horn is used. These formal occasions compel the attendance of all members. Adult members of the hunting band who are away come back; adult male visitors to the camp take part.

There is no formal body of magical belief and practice among the net hunters, nor, according to Schebesta (1952, 337), among the archers.

[P. 256-D]

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

796 If this is magic, it is totally different from the
797 kind of magic practiced by the villagers, for
778 which the Mbuti reserve an attitude of skepti-
782 cal amusement. Whatever it is, it shows a very
575 different attitude to the forest from that of the
[829] villagers. My interpretation of the *molimo*, from the meetings I have attended and the conversations I have overheard, is that it is an association of hunters that has the power of making itself heard by the God of the Forest. This God is referred to by many different names, even within the same band, and, as frequently as not, is simply referred to as "The Forest," also, though less often, as "Father" and "Grandfather." The association must ful-
[533] fill the conditions listed above in order to make
[534] itself heard; the *molimo* horn used in conjunction with song is the focal point of the meetings.
[562] Women and children are presumably excluded,
[858] because hunting, the most important of all activities to the Mbuti and regarded by him as such, is primarily the province of men, and the God of the Forest is also God of the Hunt.[1] The dominant note of the meetings is unanimity and insistence. All hunters must attend. They sit in a tight group around the fire as if by this

[1] It might be expected that, as the net hunt involves cooperation between both sexes, the women would have some part to play in the *molimo* among net hunters, at least.

[D 257-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Finally, it is worth taking very brief note of the function of music among the net-hunting Mbuti in so far as it throws light on their participation in the *nkumbi* and village society in general.

Music in the forest is almost entirely vocal. Drums may be used if within easy reach of the village, from which they are borrowed or stolen. But drums are never used for formal meetings of the *molimo* and *elima*; rhythm is given out by wooden clappers. None of this song can be said to be secular, as it is all related to the forest. The extreme importance attached to song is most plainly seen in its usage for the *molimo* and *elima*. It is mentioned above in the survey how the Mbuti consecrate a marriage ceremony that is performed in the village according to villager custom, by singing the songs of the *elima*, welcoming the bride to the women's religious association in her new home. We also see how the *elima* songs mark the arrival of Mbuti girls at the age of puberty. *Molimo* songs mark

[P 258-D]

PLATE 37 $\frac{1}{A}$

MUSICAL BOW, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

534
533
[516]

Mbuti music is almost entirely vocal, the voice being accompanied by wooden clappers. The musical bow is used sometimes to accompany the telling of legends or simply for personal amusement. As here, it is most often simply the hunting bow, tapped with an arrow, the mouth acting as a resonator.

$\frac{1}{A}$. /Plate 37 appears on page 307--Analyst/

[P 306]

I: Turnbull E-4 S (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

I: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

147
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411
534
372

/Plate 37/

[p 309] /Caption appears on p. 306/

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

The molimo trumpet, which is the Mbuti counterpart of the villager *tele*, may be heard growling in a noncommittal manner, as if uncertain which clan totem to imitate from the diversity of clans undoubtedly represented at the Mbuti *molimo* fire. It seems that the most common sound for the instrument to make under such circumstances is the growl of a leopard, which safely covers all clans, Mbuti and villager.

However, the villagers are not made welcome, and if it were any but the *kpara* or his representative the *molimo* would be abandoned the moment a villager approached. As it is, on the few occasions when I have seen a *kpara* attend, he was not offered any food or any other inducement to stay, the *molimo* trumpet remained out of sight the whole time and only growled indistinctly once or twice; the singing was sporadic and only the young men were active, dancing around the fire.

The Mbuti said that the villagers were afraid and would not in any case be likely to come near; the *kpara* only did it because he felt obliged to. In all cases of which I have any experience, except two instances where a brief *molimo* was held in a village camp for an Mbuti child who died there, the Mbuti *molimo* is held at nighttime in the forest, where interference from the village would be unthinkable. As with the *elima*, however, the closing stages are often held in the village, this being meant to coincide with the end of the official period of mourning and therefore the signal for a feast to be supplied by the villagers.

It does seem significant, nonetheless, that the Mbuti should sing any *molimo* songs in the village camp, for normally they refuse to sing any of their true forest songs when in the village. However, they are sung infrequently, with marked restraint, and widely separated by long snatches of songs that I never heard in the forest or, unfortunately, in the villages. The latter bore a distinct resemblance to certain songs taught during the *nkumbi*, and some were undoubtedly variants on *nkumbi* songs. The only information I could get was they were not "songs of the forest" but were "songs of the village." The villagers confirmed that they heard the Mbuti sometimes singing village *molimo* songs, and surprise was expressed that they would sing anything else, for everything else was *bulé*, empty.

The connection between the *molimo*, as performed by the Mbuti in the village, and the *nkumbi* was made all the more evident when on one *molimo* occasion the two members of the *kpara's* family stood up and performed a dance only seen otherwise in the initiation camp.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1959) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

It is significant that the honey season should be marked among the Mbuti by a special type of song, musically distinct from the other types, and by a ritual dance involving ritual use of fire. I have seen this dance throughout the forest, and heard the same distinctive honey song, the latter being made all the more distinct by the use of special wooden clappers called *ngbengbe* by the net-hunters of the Epulu region, *epopo* or *koko* by the archers further east.

Many different kinds of honey are recognized, and each has its own distinctive taste. All that I tasted were exceptionally sweet except for the *apuma* honey, which is very liquid and highly fermented by the time it is collected late in the season. Most honey is found high up in boles in the upper branches of the tallest trees. This is always collected by men and youths who can climb trees, unless the diameter is too great, simply by exerting lateral pressure on the trunk with their arms while they move their feet up, pulling themselves close to the trunk with a jerk as they move their arms up. If a tree is too wide to climb this way, they may loop a vine around it, holding the ends with their hands, or they may climb a smaller tree nearby and jump across where the branches meet higher up. Hollow trunks or branches are used by bees as hives.

Other honey is found a few feet above ground level, again in a hollow tree trunk, and this is the only kind of honey, except for the rare *sundu*, which is found in the ground, that a woman may collect.

The actual collecting procedure is the same. If the entrance to the hive is small, it has to be widened with an ax. Then a leaf tube in which there are smoldering embers is introduced into the hole, and by blowing through the other end, the Mbuti fills the hive with smoke and drives out the bees. Most of the bees do not sting at all, and those that do sting do not seem to cause any great pain. Even before they have all left the hive the collector puts his arm in and pulls out handfuls of honey, eating it on the spot, sharing it with friends who may be helping him. When they have had their fill they throw down what is left to those waiting below. If by themselves, they fill a special bark honey container or a basket lined with leaves, and bring the rest back to camp. There it is shared by all, either being eaten in the comb or warmed in leaf containers over the fire. If it is full of white maggots it is particularly prized, and will almost certainly be warmed to loosen the honey until the maggots wriggle, at which point it is consumed with relish.

If the honey is very dirty, full of rotten bark or leaf mold, it is wrapped in a leaf container and immersed in water. When it is pulled

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Because of the rarity of ritual performances there is one which should be mentioned here, though it seems unique and known only to net-hunters as far as I could ascertain. The ritual involves the building of a fire, with much greater care and concern than the hunting fire or the *molimo* fire, and it is believed specifically that the correct performance of this ritual will lead the Mbuti to honey and/or bring the bees, and their honey, closer to the Mbuti. A full description is given in the section on religion and magic (pp. 231–33). Here it need only be said that the preparations, including the digging of small trenches for water and the use of special woods and leaves, are designed to give the maximum amount of smoke. The lighting of the fire is accompanied by blowing on the *madé*[4] (efe: *segbe*) whistles, through which water is first poured.

All being taken into consideration, the relative lack of magic or ritual associated with food quest, the lack of interest shown in certain readily available forms of food supply such as fish, and the lack of food taboos all confirm the abundance of forest foods and the adequacy of Mbuti technology. This is important in considering the over-all economic system.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF TERRITORY

While the environment does not, through areas of shortage or abundance, determine the location of hunting bands, it does provide natural boundaries which form convenient borders between each hunting band. The total territory is more than ample for the total population, and the even distribution of game and vegetable foods means that there are no preferential areas that might make for rivalry between one band and the next. There is, in any case, a safety factor in that the bands are arranged side by side, in several vast circles, in the center of each of which the boundaries are so loosely drawn that there is effectively a no-man's-land, in which anyone may hunt and where bands occasionally, though rarely, may come in contact with each other.

The only territory to be considered, then, is that of the individual hunting band. This is again, in all cases except possibly the area

[4] The *madé* is a conical pipe, open at both ends, made of two hollowed-out cross-sections cut lengthwise, bound together either by *nkusa* twine or by strips of vine. The pouring of water, which is comparable to the pouring of water through the *molimo* trumpet (see Chapter 14) may have ritual significance, but is explained invariably and unhesitatingly as being necessary simply to get a better sound. It swells the wood and binds the sections closer to each other.

year. While Manyalibo's crime was serious enough, desecrating the forest in the honey season by hunting for the villagers, Masisi's was equally, if not more, serious, in his attitude to the trespassing bands. The night before Cephu joined him, Masisi was made the subject of discussion, from the middle of his own camp, by several youths and young hunters. They all asserted the right of their in-laws to enter their own territory, to hunt or gather honey, whether they were wanted or not. They agreed that permission should have been asked first, but that in light of the surplus of honey in the forest it was hardly necessary. The discussion ended by everyone agreeing that all the noise[3] of the past weeks was plainly the fault of the villagers who wanted the meat that caused the rift to begin with. This decision was followed by a plea from Masisi for much singing to make the forest happy again. The honey songs were immediately taken up with renewed vigor, and Masisi was prominent in maintaining them right to the end of the honey season.

6. Largely through preoccupation with Cephu, Manyalibo and Herafu, with the Effundi Somali band and now yet another trespassing band from the neighboring Eboyo territory, Masisi's camp had several days with little honey and little food of any kind. All men in the group took turns in stating their complaints from midcamp, each promising to find out who was responsible and threatening to name them. On the fourth successive day of such "noise," the singing having deteriorated, much to the disgust of the youths and the women, Masisi was particularly irritable and began a long harangue about how bad the whole thing was, including his present camp, and saying that he could name those who were responsible for it all being bad, but instead he was going to name those who must go out the next day and collect lots of honey and make it well again. He then named all the hunters. But he continued arguing and, getting more and more irate, began to imply that those he had just named were in fact those responsible. There were growing murmurs of protest, which only excited Masisi further, and there would almost certainly have been a fight had it not been for the intervention of the youths and the young women. Two of the women and one youth seized the *ngbengbe*,

[3] "Noise" is a direct translation of the word *akami* in the local dialect of KiBira, or *kelelé* in KiNgwana. It is used in ordinary parlance, but always with an unfavorable connotation. It is given special significance by adding the comment that noise is bad (*sinana*). This is tantamount to a moral judgment, invoking the supernatural sanctions of the forest, for noise is also said to kill the forest (*akami a mu ndura*), just as it is said to kill the hunt (*akami a mu mukira*).

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

wooden clappers used only for the accompaniment of honey songs, and started clapping them vigorously while singing. Masisi found the competition too strong, shrugged his shoulders, chased the women away and, taking a pair of *ngbengbe* himself, joined in the singing.

The next day the men and the older youths went honey gathering and brought back enough honey to send some as a gift to Cephu.

7. Laziness is highly criticized among the Mbuti, and is always related to hunger. It is one of the few qualities (noisy hunting is another, "blindness" in the honey season a third) that is countered by public assertion, in mime, dance and song, of the opposite value. One morning, shortly after dawn, there were murmurings of discontent because of the dampness of the forest, and suggestions that there was enough food in camp to allow for a day without hunting. One of the older hunter's wives stalked out into the center of the camp and began an elaborate wordless mime, showing that she was not going to be lazy and stay behind and play and dance "empty" games and dances. She was going to take her husband's spear and go off and hunt (she reenacted a successful hunt) and return with lots of food and share it all around and make her *roho* good and make the forest happy. Then when *she* sang and danced, it would not be empty.

It was a good show, and the whole camp looked on and laughed, then went hunting.

8. One morning, at the beginning of the honey season, a number of hunters set out, as usual, at scattered intervals. Several seemed to be staying behind, so I also remained. After about half an hour the hunters returned, one by one throwing their nets on the ground in the center of the camp. When they were all back, a bachelor youth who had gone with them began a tirade against the hunters who had stayed behind. Hearing his voice, and wondering why he was taking such a prominent part in a hunting issue, women began sleepily coming out of their huts. It was evident that too many had decided to stay home, and the hunt had not had enough beaters. The youth, Pepei, not only criticized the women as lazy animals for not coming on the hunt but also criticized the rest of the hunters, pointing out they had been even too lazy to send their sons with their nets, and had left people like himself, an orphaned youth, to do the work of men.

The hunters had nothing to say, but the women responded vigorously that they were not going to carry nets and spears for the men, they had work of their own to do, and that if enough youths had

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

sion, during which any latent dispute might be aired. I could not definitely trace any heightening of reciprocal prestations between the individuals concerned, but it could have taken place in divers ways without my knowing it.

12. A number of disputes arising over food indicate trivial domestic disagreements, and seldom reach major proportions. A wife is late in cooking her husband's food, or cooks it badly; he spills some precious oil or fails to catch any game on the hunt. Such disagreements are confined almost entirely to the younger married couples, and they usually settle them by beating each other. If the beating gets too severe then the older women intervene, slapping both boys and girls soundly. If a marital dispute is more serious it may still emerge through a trivial incident in the hopes that it will be settled peacefully. If it is ignored, or mistaken as another petty squabble, then a more serious incident has to be created.

Baumbao, Tungana's eldest son, was having trouble with his wife, Tabakali. She was frequently away, back with her parents, and was suspected of having innumerable liaisons with other men. Baumbao said that this was particularly bad because of the *molimo* that was going on at the time. She had changed her hearth when she married him, and was now a member of this hearth, and she had to contribute to the *molimo*. He first brought the issue up simply by accusing her of cooking badly, and slapping her so hard that an old widow intervened, hitting Baumbao on the back with a burning log. Then everyone agreed that Tabakali was indeed a bad cook but that Baumbao knew that when he married her.

Baumbao took drastic measures. He took down the baskets full of offerings to the *molimo* from the *molimo* hearth, uprooted the sticks and the vine marking the site, and threw the lot onto the ground. While doing this he was busily saying that the *molimo* was empty. He said he had dreamed that his dead sister, Beselinda (naming her), had appeared to him in a dream and told him it was time someone made a good *molimo* trumpet and stopped using drainpipes.[7] She told him to make one and, having made it, to use it and then keep it carefully and not let it rot. He had done this and had been supplying

[7] As described elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961), the Mbuti on one occasion made use of some metal drainpiping they found in the local administrative center. Recognizing its musical potentialities, they stole two lengths and used them as *molimo* trumpets. Everyone agreed that the main thing was that the sound was undeniably good, but the more conservative elements strongly felt the lack of the identity between the conventional trumpet (made of a forest wood) and the forest itself.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

593 578 Everyone was tired of disputes in the camp, and they turned on Kengé and told him it was he who was a bad husband. He promptly said, "I shall tell my mother; I shall tell her everything, and she will come here." His mother was notoriously argumentative, and the thought of having another disputant on their hands was too much. There were unanimous shouts of disapproval, whereupon Kengé said, "So you let the Lesé Mbuti join empty Cephu in our territory, Cephu who always hunts against us and should be turned out completely and forever, yet you do not want your own mother-in-law to come and live with you. What kind of Mbuti are you?" He went inside his hut and after a few muffled cries and sounds of blows, there were other sounds, less offensive, and in a half hour or so Kengé and his wife came out together, making a great show of friendliness, peering into Mbaaka's hut and laughing loudly at them for fighting so much.

DISPUTES CONCERNING TRIVIA

578 152 A headache, a hungry stomach, a painful leg, a leaking hut or a damp forest—almost any kind of discomfort is likely to make an Mbuti irritable, and he will pick a quarrel with ease and readiness so that he can make his heart feel better, as they say. It is known to be bad to keep things concealed, so there is no particular disgrace in voicing suspicions and revealing antagonisms, particularly if it is done quietly. Few, however, managed to make their heart feel better without creating a great deal of noise and making everyone else feel considerably worse.

578 Most such disputes, and there were likely to be several every day, died as they began, in complete indecision. The following are typical instances:

[524] [881] 26. A small girl, playing in imitation of the boy's *nkumbi*, playfully whipped some of the men, including her uncle, Masalito. Masalito was enraged and hit her, which started a fight between his age mates—that is, the young hunters.

[534] [562] 27. Pepei fought another youth with sticks because the other told him to beat the *banja* sticks, and Pepei said he was not a woman to be ordered around. Tungana's wife then beat Pepei, saying that women do not get ordered around, only children, and that is why nobody will marry him.

[593] 28. Kengé beat his sister because she caught cold.

29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an

29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an administrator there who took her photograph. Masisi demanded the money, and the girl said she did not ask for any. Masisi's wife said the girl was a fool, that she could have got fifty francs. In fact, she was a thief because she deprived everyone of cigarettes. The girl was still standing up where she arrived in camp, and Masisi's wife went up and forced her to sit down, and thrust her private parts into the girl's face as a gesture of contempt. The girl's parents said nothing.

30. A man burped loudly during the evening meal, and brought forth insults from all sides that would have developed into a fight had Moké not taken the *banja* sticks and started beating them, a sign for the *molimo* singing to begin.

31. A girl, decorated with leaves stuck in her bark cloth, was dancing vigorously and some of the leaves kept falling out. She blamed the younger children and started beating them until they fled, crying. Nobody interfered.

32. Amabosu, for no known reason, refused to allow his wife to move the fire from their hearth when changing camp. She went to her brother's hut and sat there sulking for nearly a whole day. Amabosu, fed by his mother, paid no attention.

33. Occasionally, however, even the most trivial origins can lead to a serious and lasting rift. Such a dispute, described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 6), involved two brothers, Aberi and Masalito. It started when Masalito went to visit his brother on a rainy day. Masalito was in the main camp, Aberi in Cephu's camp. Aberi was asleep, and his wife insulted Masalito twice, first by refusing to smoke the same pipe, second by offering him an old and dirty pipe-stem to take back to the main camp with him. This led to a fight between the two brothers which was temporarily healed by the force of ridicule levelled against Aberi, and further subdued by the action of the *molimo* in beating Masalito's hut as a sign of the displeasure of the forest.

However, the bad feeling remained, if hidden, until Aberi's death.

DISPUTES CONCERNING THEFT

Theft, apart from the kind practiced by Pepei, was unknown except in the village context. Sometimes when Pepei was caught he was thrashed; on the other hand, sometimes he was tolerantly laughed at and allowed to go his way. There was once, however, a curious case that was never settled.

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Two youths then take out the vines and shake them in all directions, liberally sprinkling anyone who happens to be standing by. Other youths are by now standing about, whistling on their honey whistles, a form of *madi* called *singbe*. The kindling is then stuck upright in the trenches, beside the *teka* vines, which have been replaced. Children help with this.

A hunter then places a single ember, apparently drawn from any fire, in a *mongongo* leaf and, having filled the center square with *mongongo* leaf stems, he places the coal on top. More kindling is added, crisscrossed much like a house of cards, each piece carefully placed by youths and hunters together. Without fanning, the kindling catches and a dense cloud of smoke is given off. An elder then brings over a bundle of old leaves that have been used for collecting honey, and places them near the fire. He waits until the smoke begins to dwindle, then directs the operation of placing the honey axes in the hearth, waiting for the blades to get warm and then using them to split some *toangbe* wood. The *toangbe* tree and the *tembu* tree are both good honey trees, but the *tembu* tree has to grow "old and fat" before it is favored by the bees.

Elders then carefully arrange the old leaves, adding more as necessary, in a large circle around the fire. Four *singbe* whistles are stuck in the ashes of the fire, pointing to the cardinals. While elders stand and shout, women gather and loudly clap their hands, and both hunters and youths kneel on the circle of leaves, facing in to the hearth, and begin pounding their fists rhythmically on the ground. The tempo increases to a maximum and is broken off with a sudden shout. This is repeated twice more, after which the hearth is abandoned and camp life resumes as though nothing had happened.

The Mbuti themselves are unable to give any satisfactory explanation of the performance, and it seems to combine elements of genuine magic (for they talk of the smoke attracting the bees and bringing honey to them) and of invocation of supernatural intervention (the *keti* are said to hear the pounding on the ground and will know that the Mbuti want honey). Whatever it may be thought to achieve, however, *angbe* (also *angbelu*) undoubtedly reiterates the division of the band into age groups, a division that is evident throughout the net-hunting season but is not so necessarily a part of activity during the honey season.

However regarded, Mbuti magic implies belief and is to that extent religious, no matter how much it may also be thought to have direct causal attributes, and the belief always supposes the benevolence of

ment of a dispute is to avoid attaching blame to one individual or another, for this would result in a rift in the band. The blame has to be either deflected or dissipated, and the village notion of witchcraft is sometimes used to this end.

In the prolonged dispute over Ekianga and his three wives, the situation was aggravated by having, in the same band, Ekianga's brother-in-law, Amabosu, with whom he had exchanged sisters, and Amabosu's mother, old Sau. Sau made an ideal scapegoat, conforming to the village notions of what a witch should look like, and her role at times became rather like that of the camp clown. She would be accused of dancing outside people's huts in the middle of the night, and on one occasion she was distinctly heard to mutter in an exasperated voice, "Do they expect me to urinate inside my hut?"—for she had indeed emerged in the middle of the night to answer a call of nature. Nonetheless, on that occasion she rose to the needs of the moment and agreed that she had been dancing because she had been made to dance, and she was not responsible, and she was sorry for any harm she had done.

However, she was a major and active peacemaker in the family squabble, actively intervening to prevent Ekianga and Amabosu from fighting, and equally actively looking after the children of all the wives involved, passing them from one to the other and in this way helping to preserve reasonable relationships at least between her daughter and her son's wife.

All the more in the village was Sau used as a scapegoat. But whereas in the forest the scapegoat, even if the clown, feels the full weight of the blame he takes upon himself and may suffer some unpopularity, though temporary, in the village there is no such disadvantage, and old Sau played her role with zest. At a time when there were an unusual number of deaths through stomach disorders contracted in the village, the Mbuti were sharply criticized by the villagers for allowing this to happen and not taking the proper protective measures. It was plainly witchcraft, if not sorcery, and it was their duty to find the witch and have the necessary purification. An elaborate witch-hunt was held in the village, and of course Sau was finally "divined" and dragged out of her hut—where, at the time, she was dozing—complaining about all the noise.

Emerging into the center of the village she made all the usual protests, and performed the usual trick of stabbing herself with a knife, but holding it carefully so that it just nicked the skin sufficiently to

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PEPO

The life force that animates all moving, living things, without which they would be mere vegetable growths, unable to move or think. The word *pepo* also has connotations of air and wind, and breathing is thought of as a manifestation of *pepo*. A gale of wind, then, is interpreted by some Mbuti as the breath of the forest itself (*pepo nde ndura*), as the breath of the disembodied spirits, or *keti* (*pepo nde baketi*).

KETI

Disembodied spirits, human and animal, who are not necessarily the spirits of the dead but may be independent manifestations of the forest, and who are disembodied only in that they are invisible to the Mbuti. They have an existence otherwise comparable to that of the Mbuti, and are likewise animated by *pepo*. There is no conflict of interests between them and the Mbuti, though occasionally the two worlds inadvertently become confused. An Mbuti may be in hot pursuit of an animal that suddenly disappears; he is likely to say that it must have been *keti*. An animal mysteriously drops dead; it was killed by a *keti* hunter (*keti a mu'e*) who thought he was in pursuit of a *keti* animal. Hallucinations and dreams are primarily the result of accidentally slipping from the one world into the other. All such meetings of *keti* and Mbuti are regarded as abnormal, and are never deliberately sought. They do not exactly induce fear, but there is undeniably the belief that one might cross over so effectively that one would never come back. The Mbuti say that if this happened you might not even know you had crossed over, which indicates that they conceive of the *keti* world as a mirror of their own.[1] Dreams, then, do not convey authority as being divine portents but, being real experience of a mirror world, they are, like all experiences, to be learned from. Thus Ambosu dreamed constantly that he was singing into the *molimo* trumpet. This did not give him the right to take up this role,

[1] On two occasions I heard *ekokomea* described laughingly as a dance of the *keti*. The dance, involving a reversal of the sexes, is primarily associated with the *molimo*, hence with the spirit and supernatural world. There is a hunting dance in which there is a rapid succession of changes in direction, the hunters becoming the hunted and vice versa. Yet another instance of Mbuti recognition of reversal is seen in the legend of the Mbuti plantation (see Chapter 12), in which the Mbuti are the cultivators threatened by the animals of the forest (elephants), who undoubtedly represent the villagers.

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but everyone agreed that it was a clear indication that he should try. He became the leading trumpet singer, then, not through divine choice but simply through his experience in the *keti* world. He was not regarded as more spiritual, merely as more experienced. However, insofar as both Mbuti and *keti* derive their *pepo* from the forest, if the forest wills them to hunt together in the same time and place then the mirror images coincide exactly and it is, indeed, a "strong" hunt. Such coincidence is exhausting, however, and it is not something actively wished for except, possibly, in times of particularly poor hunting. Ideally the Mbuti and the *keti* should follow each other closely, but always remain just slightly apart.

BORU

A rather difficult concept of the "house" (*endu*—the same word as for a hut) inhabited by *pepo*. The human and animal body of flesh and blood is, in a sense, *boru*, and so is the invisibility of the *keti*. It is a term seldom used, but the concept affords a firm basis for a code of respect for the body, abuse or mutilation of which may drive away the *pepo*, causing "death" (which for the Mbuti is simply the departure of *pepo* and its return to the forest or the world of *keti*). Thus physical violence as a means of settling a dispute is abhorred as a sacrilege. A sound thrashing is perfectly in order, but any violence that produces blood causes an opening through which *pepo* may escape. For although associated with air and wind and thus with breath, it is not thought of as *being* any of these things, and its exact means of escape is unknown. The bodily apertures are all regarded as requiring attention, however, as possible avenues. It might be pointed out here that insofar as *pepo* is associated with life and may escape through these apertures, this is perfectly consistent with the Mbuti recognition of the sexual act as a means of conveying life, though they do not explicitly refer to semen as *pepo*. It is also consistent with the variations on the sexual act found in the *ekokomea* dance, where not only are the sexes reversed but attention is drawn to the less usual apertures, to be somewhat delicate. The role of *ekokomea* as a major feature of the death festival becomes immediately more understandable, its burlesque form allowing for the stated antipathy of the Mbuti to the unproductive forms of sexual perversion *ekokomea* so graphically depicts.

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"strong" has the same double meaning that it has when used to describe song. In using either the Ngwana term (*nguvu*) or the Bira term (*mota*), the Mbuti may imply difficulty as well as sheer physical strength. A sudden noise that is *mota* has an inherent power of its own. A song or whistle has power only if it is properly performed. The proper performance is not so much the following of a prescribed pattern, though there may be and usually is such a pattern, if general, but rather the transference of *pepo* so that by contact with *pepo* the song or the whistle becomes *mota*. Singing or whistling not so touched with *pepo* is "empty noise," and doubly bad. Whistling is widely used to arrest action of any kind. In everyday life, whistling brings the movement of all hunters and beaters to an immediate stillness and stops all sound among them. The sign for them to continue is an imitated animal cry. In the camp, if someone thinks he hears a foreign sound—of approaching people or game, of a "crying" tree (a tree starts creaking some days before it falls, and this is referred to as "crying")—he whistles to call for silence so that all may listen and hear. During the *molimo* songs, particularly, but during any song, also, whistling softly brings the song to an end. A sudden storm is likely to bring shrill whistles, though nobody claims to even hope for them to stop the storm, though they all say it is worth trying. They explain that whistling is effective in other realms because it is the affair of the Mbuti, but it will not stop a storm because that is the affair of the forest.[8]

All such whistling is done with the lips. Whistles are also made of seeds and carved from wood, however, and though the seed-whistles are purely for children to play with, the wooden whistles (*piki, segbe*) have special usages. Rarely, a small whistle may be attached to a net, and although functional it is never blown. Similar whistles are used by those net-hunters who build a hunting fire in the camp, and are placed within the vine circle surrounding the fire, again not blown. Larger whistles made of two semicylindrical sections of wood and bound together by vine or *nkusa* twine, tapering to a point at one end (left open so it can be stopped with a finger) and notched for blowing at the other end, are sometimes attached to a fur cap worn by hunters, and may be blown before the hunt, possibly during a hunting dance. Similar whistles made of *angbe* wood, from the *angbe* tree that provides most of the honey, are used during the honey season

[8] Cooper (1941, 24 seq.), in drawing comparisons between the Semang, Andamanese, and Eta, finds much similar interest in noise.

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"to call the bees" (in the sense of attracting their attention, not of summoning them). The belief is that these whistles will halt the game or the bees, so that they may be found more easily.

All such whistling, whether by lip or by *piki*, is done by men. Women rarely whistle, though they may do so to the same end as the men. If they do, it is considered all the more *mota*.

It could easily be explained by the Mbuti that the sound itself paralyzes the animals or the bees, and has this direct effect (and could so be more properly called magical), but they deny this strongly and say that the forest hears the *piki* and leads them to the bees or the game (or alternatively that the forest holds the bees and the game still for its children to find them).

In ordinary conversation, sounds are widely used to convey different ideas, a snap of the fingers indicating that the action being described was done suddenly, a high-pitched, drawn-out exhalation indicating it was done slowly. Wherever possible, the narrative is illustrated by imitations of the sound of the action described. Vowel sounds, unformed into words, are used in conversation similarly to heighten ideas, convey added emotion, to supply an element that would otherwise be missing and which is plainly of great importance to the Mbuti. For the forest is nearly always full of sound, and the Mbuti refer to this constant background by saying "the forest is talking" (*ndura a lufu*). The Mbuti listen, and interpret, and make use of what they hear. If the forest stops "talking," then it is a sign that something is very wrong and alerts the Mbuti to imminent danger.

It is not surprising, then, that sound so carefully controlled as song should be considered as *mota nengo*, *mota ngbekbekbei*, the "strongest" possible kind of sound, activated by the breath that is so mysteriously connected with *pepo*. Song is used to communicate with the forest, and it is significant that the emphasis is on the actual sound, not on the words. Frequently the mere vowel sounds are used, sometimes imitative of animals, birds or bees but more often simply to suit the melodic line of the song. When words are used they are most often trivial, and may be spontaneous and highly sketchy references to one or another event of the day. That the song is directed at the forest, and intended to awaken the forest, is most clearly seen in the *molimo* festivals, which are the Mbuti reaction to crisis. The *molimo* is named for the festival, for the society that performs the festival, and for the central and solitary piece of paraphernalia, the trumpet that echoes the song of the Mbuti on into the depths of the forest.

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tled, how good the weather is, and whether or not visiting relatives or friends are expected. Within a few days, however, the festival will begin, and from the moment of its inception its stated concern is to awaken and, even more important, to rejoice the forest. The lesser *molimo* is more often spoken of as "awakening" the forest (*su kongi ndura*), though that too has to be done in a way that will rejoice it. The greater *molimo* should ideally be a festival of sheer joy. The course of the festival becomes more and more a symbolic triumph of life over death, the death of the individual being recognized in the final dramatic stamping out of the *molimo* fire, the fire of life. This is not done, however, until time and time again the fire has been attacked in an effort to destroy it, but has been regenerated by the dances of the men, who in a dance that imitates the act of copulation, with the fire as their partner, fan the scattered fire back into a blaze of life.

It is normally the old woman, who is an integral part of every greater *molimo*, who either by herself or with a girl attacks the fire, dancing through it and scattering it all around. Thus the woman who gives birth to life also seeks to destroy it. She is referred to by no title other than "mother," the same term of address used for the forest in its capacity as giver of life and death. It is primarily the young men who hastily rebuild the fire and fan it back into a blaze with their dance of life. It is frequently said that the women used to possess the *molimo*, but it was stolen from them by the men, and this dance, together with the tying up of the men by the old lady (Turnbull, *ibid.*, p. 323), may well represent in part this early conflict, and the attempt of the women to regain possession of the *molimo*. Whatever the symbolism, it is nowhere clearly stated by the Mbuti, each individual claiming to see something different in the performance. It is generally agreed, however, that it shows how strong the women are, and that they have to be respected by men.

Whether or not there is thought to be any correlation with *pepo* (breath), the power of breath to fan sparks into fire is demonstrated when coals are placed in the end of the *molimo* trumpet. The singer blows as he sings, and the sparks that fly out of the end of the trumpet are greeted by murmurs or even shouts of acclaim.

The trumpet is sometimes referred to as an "animal" of the forest, though this is generally in connection with its morning appearance. Nonetheless it is referred to as needing food and water, and these it symbolically receives. It is also passed through the *molimo* fire and

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765 372 534 given fire to eat, just as water is passed through it to "cool" it. It is rubbed with ashes and earth. It is brought into direct contact with every individual by being passed over their heads as they sit around the fire singing, and each individual will at some time or another, at his own whim, scoop up ashes and rub the trumpet with them. And in [535] [831] the evening appearances of the trumpet at the *molimo* hearth, while the singer holds one end to his mouth and sings, the youth holding the far end pumps it up and down as he dances in imitation of the sexual act, sometimes holding the mouth of the trumpet close to his genitals, imitating the part of either man or woman. Little doubt is left about the symbolic connection between fire and life.[9]

765 561 533 There is an important distinction between the evening and the morning appearances of the *molimo* trumpet, and between the roles played by different age groups. In the evening the singing is primarily in control of the *mangesé*, or elders. Frequently, they have their own fire, the hunters have theirs, and the *kiyana*, or male youths, have theirs. Everyone joins in the singing, the elders maintaining over-all control and the hunters being the most prominent singers, except for the *molimo*-trumpet singer, who may be a youth or a young hunter, being chosen because of his ability as a singer rather than for any [535] other reason. It is the youths that do most of the dancing at their fire or at the central *molimo* fire (from which theirs is made by taking burning embers and setting them separately). The whole intent of the evening is to rejoice the forest, and this is done by singing throughout the night, and by eating a feast specially prepared from food contributed to the *molimo* hearth. (Just as with food, so with firewood and with fire itself—every single household in the camp is expected to contribute.) In the early days of the festival the old lady does not appear, and there is no attempt to stamp out the fire, though erotic [535] [831] dances are constantly being danced around and over it. It is only toward the end of the festival that the nightlong songfest is dramatized by the appearance of the old lady, her dancing through the fire in an attempt to destroy it, and her tying up of the men (referred to as both tying up the hunt and tying up the *molimo*). The evening 765 meetings of the *molimo*, though full of the joy the Mbuti wish to convey to the forest, are nonetheless solemn in that the purpose is

[831] [9] Fire is primarily connected with women; the hearth is often referred to as the vagina; the association of blood and fire is considered particularly dangerous. Thus the association of the male *molimo* trumpet with the fire and the ashes gives the trumpet phallic significance in this context. Elsewhere, this precise symbolism seems unimportant, the important factor being simply the trumpet's masculinity.

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never lost sight of. The trumpet itself, while avowedly an "animal" whose animal noises (mainly in imitation of elephant and leopard) are designed to scare women and children and keep them in their huts, is the only sign of the presence of a supernatural power. The main function of the trumpet is to sing, and to pass on the song of the Mbuti into the forest. It is taken off to a distance from where it picks up the song from the men around the *molimo* hearth and echoes it on into the night. This way, the Mbuti say, the forest is sure to hear it and be pleased.

Normally a trumpet is kept high up, concealed in a tree. During a festival, however, it is kept in water except when in use, for it is considered to represent the power of the forest for chastisement. Keeping it in water keeps it "cool." It acts, it seems, as an intermediary, passing on the song of the Mbuti to the forest, but returning in the morning with power, and sometimes with anger. When it appears in the morning, just before dawn, the men have had at the most an hour's sleep, and this is a signal for them to begin singing again. An adult male who fails to sing during a greater *molimo* festival is allegedly killed, and when the trumpet appears in the morning its first act is to search for sleeping men. It is held by a number of youths, who run up and down the camp in search (this may also happen during the evening). But then, to show its power, the trumpet is carried from hut to hut, the youths beating on each with branches and tearing leaves off the roofs. The huts of any troublemakers are particularly singled out, though with due regard for the process described under "Government," by which individual blame is avoided. The older men and even the women may yell at the *molimo* to go away, or to go back to the water, but on this occasion the youths are effectively in charge. There is generally a mock battle in which some of the youths will try to block the path of the trumpet, borne by other youths, or to deflect it in another direction. There may even be a tug-of-war, with some youths pulling it in one direction, some in another, though such contests are formal and enacted more as a dance than as an actual test of strength. All the time, those carrying the trumpet keep it concealed behind leafy branches, or simply by holding it between them. In the end it is carried out of the camp triumphantly as dawn breaks, and with a few defiant bellows returns to its secret hiding place in the water. A vine stretched across the stream warns women and children to keep away.

It is noteworthy, however, that the trumpet is not considered as

765 534 778 It is noteworthy, however, that the trumpet is not considered as sacred in itself, hidden though it may be. There was one instance when a trumpet was stolen by a member of a different family and a different band, simply because it had such a good "voice" and could sing so well. Whatever power it possesses it is believed to possess through the quality of its "voice." The fact that it can be stolen or lost (they sometimes get washed away in the floods that follow a particularly torrential downpour), without causing any ritual crisis, is in keeping with the lack of concern for inheritance of the trumpet. It is said by youths that anyone who wants to make one can have it, but that if they do not want to be bothered they need not, for "the *molimo* is a lot of work." Elders, however, say clearly that there used [613] to be one for each family, and by family they plainly defined a minimal lineage, all male members descended from a single living grandfather or from the same father, living or dead.

765 534 [611] [174] The fact that they also say that the *molimo* used to be the concern of the band only, perhaps indicates an earlier but now less pronounced emphasis on the principle of patrilineal descent; be that as it may, a noted feature of *molimo* festivals today is their utterly nonlineal nature (Tables 9 and 10).[1] With reference to the greater *molimo* held for Balekimito, there were at one time three *molimo* trumpets in action, only one of which belonged to a member of Balekimito's lineage, the second belonging to her son, the third to Kokoyo, whose wife's stepmother's brother was married to a woman of the same clan as Balekimito—a rather distant claim to lineage—but Kokoyo and Ekianga brought out their *molimo* trumpets because their *roho* wanted it. [621] Thus, by this means they emphasized the importance not of lineage membership but of membership of the band, and the *molimo*, as of old, was at least a band festival, if not a lineage festival.

765 621 771 718 181 182 A more systematic analysis in the next chapter shows the importance of the *molimo* festival as an integrating factor in Mbuti life, and indeed the importance of their whole religious system, based as it is upon a belief in the benevolence of a forest spirit or power. It can, for the moment, be seen clearly enough that it expresses among other things the latent antagonisms that exist between the sexes, because of the same lack of clear, formal sex delineations that characterize the *molimo* itself. It also unites the band (regardless of kinship considerations) in a common expression of the dependence of the Mbuti upon the forest, not only as an economic entity but also as a spiritual entity, a spiritual power that looks after their needs but which is also able to inflict hardship and punishment. The *molimo* heightens

[1] [see page 331 -- Analysis]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P 276-K]

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39. The musical bow, apart from the wooden clappers used during the *molimo* and during the honey season, is the only musical instrument that seems to be original to the Mbuti. Even this is slightly used, the one here simply being a hunting bow tapped by an arrow, the mouth acting as the resonator. An extremely musical people, the Mbuti are, unlike the villagers, vocal rather than instrumental.

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40. Balekimito, the old lady who "died well," and for whom the exceptionally long *molimo* festival was held. The charm around her neck, stolen from the villagers, would have been regarded by the Arabized Ngwana as powerful magic. For her it was a mere ornament.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 276-L]

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41. A spot like this, in the Lelo River, was the resting place of the *molimo* trumpets used in honor of Balekimito. Vines are stretched across the stream to warn intruders to keep away. The precaution, however, is as much for fear of theft as for fear of desecration.

[065
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3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

123 It began to rain, and Njobo decided that he was not going to stay
304 and get wet, so he left. Moke was on the point of doing the same
when Kolongo returned. Obviously anxious to get the whole thing
[152] over with as little ceremony as possible and return to his warm dry hut, he rubbed the black ash-paste hard into the cuts until it filled them and congealed the blood that still flowed. And there it is today, ash made from the plants of the forest, a part of the forest that is a part of the flesh, carried by every self-respecting Pygmy male. And as long as it is with me it will always call me back.

The women thought it a great joke when I finally got back to camp, wet and still rather shaky. They crowded around to have a
[152] look and burst into shrieks of laughter. They said that now I was a
[885] real man with the marks of a hunter, so I would have to get married and then I would never be able to leave. Moke looked slyly at me. He had not explained that the marks had quite that significance.

123 It was later that evening when the men were singing that I heard
533 the molimo. By then I had learned to speak the language quite well,
• 534 and I had heard them discussing whether or not to bring the molimo out; there was some opposition on the grounds that it was "a thing of the forest," and not of the village, but old Moke said it was good for me to hear it before I left, as it would surely not let me stay long away but would bring me safely back.

First I heard it call out of the night from the other side of the Nepussi River, where three years earlier I had helped Pat Putnam build a dam. The dam was still there, though breached by continuous flooding. The hospital where Pat had given his life lay just beyond, now an overgrown jungle, only a few crumbling vine-covered walls left standing, the rest lost in a wilderness of undergrowth. Somewhere over there, in the darkness, the molimo now called; it sounded like someone singing but it was not a human voice. It was a deep, gentle, lowing sound, sometimes breaking off into a quiet falsetto, sometimes growling like a leopard. As the men sang

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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their songs of praise to the forest, the molimo answered them, first on this side, then on that, moving around so swiftly and silently that it seemed to be everywhere at once.

Then, still unseen, it was right beside me, not more than two feet away, on the other side of a small but thick wall of leaves. As it replied to the song of the men, who continued to sing as though nothing were happening, the sound was sad and wistful, and immensely beautiful. Several of the older men were sitting near me, and one of them, without even looking up, asked me if I wanted to see the molimo. He then continued singing as though he didn't particularly care what my reply was, but I knew that he did. I was so overcome by curiosity that I almost said "yes"; I had been fighting hard to stop myself from trying to peer through the leaves to where it was now growling away almost angrily. But I knew that Pygmy youths were not allowed to see it until they had proved themselves as hunters, as adults in Pygmy eyes, and although I now carried the marks on my forehead I still felt unqualified. So I simply said, no, I did not think I was ready to see it.

The molimo gave a great burst of song and with a wild rush swept across the camp, surrounded by a dozen youths packed so tightly together that I could see nothing, and disappeared into the forest. Those left in the camp made no comment; they just kept on with their song, and after a while the voice of the molimo, replying to them, became fainter and fainter and was finally lost in the night and in the depths of the forest from where it had come.

This experience convinced me that here was something that I could do that was really worth while, and that I was not doing it justice by coming armed with cameras and recording equipment, as I had on this trip. The Pygmies were more than curiosities to be filmed, and their music was more than a quaint sound to be put on

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talking, some sleeping, some sobbing softly. The men started singing, and after a while I heard their song echoed from far off in the forest and recognized the wistful sound, hollow and ghostly, answering the men with snatches of their own song, sometimes singing its own variations, sometimes breaking off into low, growling, animal noises. The men continued singing as though nothing were happening, and I heard the molimo coming closer, circling around the camp. The women were all quiet in their huts now, and the fire had burned low; the camp was pitch dark except for an occasional glow where the ashes of some family hearth still glowed faintly outside a hut. Even near a village, Cephu never built huts in imitation of the Negroes, and his camp was a typical forest camp, a close little circle of small conical huts, made of a framework of saplings covered entirely with leaves.

The molimo was silent for a few minutes and I looked at the faces of the men around our fire, which was flickering faintly in the middle of the camp. They were all staring at the flames, their eyes wide open but seeing things I had never seen. Only Cephu was lying back in his chair, and he seemed to be asleep. There was a slight movement beside me and I heard the molimo almost in my ear. The sound was gentler and a little sad; it was now singing closely with the men, as if answering their song. Amabosu had joined the group and was on my left, and I saw that he had his hands up to his mouth. Then in the shadows I saw that he was singing into what looked like a long length of bamboo, a sort of trumpet, which was producing that eerie, hollow sound. After a few minutes he stood up. One of Tungana's sons also stood up, and I could see that he was holding the other end of the trumpet. The two danced around the fire, waving the bamboo tube over the flames, Amabosu singing into it all the time and the men's chorus growing louder and louder. Then the two performers dashed suddenly away into the forest behind the camp, and after a few leopardlike growls the trumpet was heard no

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more. The men continued singing for about another hour, but as by then Cephu and the rest of his family had gone inside their huts, they stopped abruptly and returned to the main camp.

The next evening the singing was around a fire in the middle of the main camp. After all, the molimo was Njobo's, and Cephu just went to sleep, so why should we go to his camp? A few men from Cephu's family came over, but not Cephu. The singing went on for about four hours, but the molimo did not appear again. The third night it was the same, except that nobody turned up from Cephu's camp.

I thought this a little strange and asked Moke about it. He said that normally one would not call out the molimo for a child; that was why nobody was really enthusiastic, but Cephu had insisted. Besides, the molimo should only be in the forest, not so close to a Negro village. It was all right to sing molimo songs as long as there were no Negroes about, but even then it was not good to sing them near a village. The molimo itself, however, should come out only in the forest, where it belonged, and there was a lot of work attached, as it had to be given food to eat, water to drink, and fire to keep it warm. He stopped there and could not be persuaded to go any further. He just waved his hands in the air and said emphatically that this molimo was empty, meaningless, a farce.

At the end of a week the mourning period prescribed by the Negroes was over; the women, who were meant to wail at sunrise, noon and sunset, stopped wailing. A relative of Cephu's Negro "master" had come over to the village the night before, and the men had had a final burst of singing for him, but with their tongues in their cheeks. Moke told me not to think that this was a real molimo; it was what they did for the villagers to make them think their molimo was the same as the Pygmies'. The villagers also make use of a musical instrument called the *molimo*, but it is meant to represent the

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Kenge uses a hunting bow as a musical instrument.
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THE SONG OF THE FOREST

Makubasi wandered about aimlessly, poking here and there from habit to see if there was any tasty fruit to be had for the picking, but it was too dark to see.

Just as I was about to ask where the others had gone they reappeared, announcing their presence with low whistles that sounded like the call of a night bird. They were in two pairs, each pair carrying between them, over their shoulders, a long slender object. Even at that moment I wondered if they would veer off into the complete blackness of the forest before I could see more closely, but they came on toward us. Madyadya was carrying the rear end of what proved to be a huge tube of some kind, fifteen feet long. He gestured proudly and said, "See, this is our molimo!" Then he turned and putting his mouth to the end of the trumpet, which it was, he blew a long, raucous raspberry. Everyone doubled up with laughter, the first sound they had made since leaving camp.

I was slightly put out by this sacrilege and was about to blame it rather pompously on irreligious youth, when I saw something that upset me even more. I do not know exactly what I had expected, but I knew a little about molimo trumpets and that they were sometimes made out of bamboo. I suppose I had expected an object elaborately carved, decorated with patterns full of ritual significance and symbolism, something sacred, to be revered, the very sight or touch of which might be thought of as dangerous. I felt that I had a right, in the heart of the tropical rain forest, to expect something wonderful and exotic. But now I saw that the instrument which produced such a surprisingly rude sound, shattering the stillness as it shattered my illusions, was not made of bamboo or wood, and it certainly was not carved or decorated in any way. It was a length of metal drainpipe, neatly threaded at each end, though somewhat bent in the middle. The second trumpet was just the same, shining and sanitary, but only half the length.

Everyone was looking at me to see what my reactions would be.

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I asked, keeping my voice low, how it was that for the molimo, which was so sacred to them, they should use water piping stolen from roadside construction gangs, instead of using the traditional materials.

Evidently now that they had the trumpets in their possession there was no longer any need for silence, for they answered calmly and loudly with a counter-question. "What does it matter what the molimo is made of? This one makes a great sound, and, besides, it does not rot like wood. It is much trouble to make a wooden one, and then it rots away and you have to make another."

Ausu, to prove how well it sounded, took the end of the longer pipe, which evidently belonged to Manyalibo, and all of a sudden the forest was filled with the sound of trumpeting elephants. The others clapped their hands with pleasure and said, "You see? Doesn't it sound well?"

My conservative feelings were still wounded, however, and it gave me some pleasure to see the difficulty the Pygmies had on the way back, carrying a fifteen-foot length of drainpipe through the forest. It was pitch dark now, though the moon was full, yet we still followed only the smallest animal trails, this being the quickest route. Frequently Madyadya, carrying the front end of his foster-father's trumpet, turned too sharply, following the trail, so that whoever was carrying the rear end was forced off the path and the trumpet became jammed between two trees. But in spite of these mishaps we returned almost as quickly as we had come.

When we came to the first stream we all stopped. The moonlight was just strong enough for me to see both trumpets laid carefully in the water, then lifted up so that the water ran through from end to end. "The molimo likes to drink," I was told. We washed our feet and continued, but at every stream we came to the performance was repeated, both trumpets being immersed and allowed to "drink." Every now and again, whoever was at the rear end of a trumpet

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managed to find enough breath to blow a long blast that was sometimes musical, but more often not. The younger Pygmies all seemed anxious to have a turn, but Ausu, who was the only one who really knew how to play, kept aloof. He ran ahead of us all, silently, into the night.

It was so dark along the trails that I had to run barely two feet behind whoever was in front, occasionally reaching out and touching him to make sure he was still there. I had learned to lift my feet high to avoid roots, but I did not know the trails inch by inch, as the Pygmies did, and once I put my foot in an animal hole and fell. But nobody stopped, and I had to run all the faster to catch up.

Only at the streams was there enough light for us to see each other dimly; and at each stream I looked at those two drainpipes being lovingly washed and fed with water. I was curious as to how far this was a ritual act, and how far it was originally a practical measure that would make a wooden trumpet swell, closing any possible cracks, so that it would sound better. Ausu said that of course that was why they did it, they did the same thing to all their wooden whistles and flutes as well; it made their voices stronger. Then he added casually, "We know it makes no difference to the sound of the metal trumpet, but we do it anyway."

When we reached the top of the hill that descends, gently at first, then steeply, into the Lelo River, we all halted and stood in the glade. It was lit with silvery patches of light, shining here and there uncertainly, where the moonlight found its way down through the rustling trees. Even the darker shadows glowed every now and then, but with a strange natural luminosity that came from the mushroom-shaped nests of the termites. We could hear the Lelo swishing below, and on the far side of the river voices from the camp floated lazily across to us, as though we were gods and they were mortals, infinitely far away.

We stood there for a moment. Then Ausu took the end of the

765 534 long trumpet, with Madyadya holding the front on his shoulder, pointing it over the river toward the camp. Once again the night 765 534 533 was shattered as though there were a whole herd of elephants trumpeting shrilly all around us. When the echoes died away, the camp 825 across the river had fallen silent. Ausu blew into the trumpet again, and this time it was as if a leopard were growling angrily nearby. [201] One of the youths clapped himself under the armpit, as Pygmies frequently do, and said to himself, "That is its voice, just exactly." He clapped himself again with delight, and gave a little growl of his own.

765 533 156 781 534 Little more than a minute had passed when Amabosu, the great singer, appeared from the shadows below us. He looked at us without saying anything, without smiling or making any greeting. His eyes had the strange look they often took on when he was singing or playing the drums in a dance in the village. They seemed to be seeing something quite different from what was going on in front of [825] them. He went up to Ausu and took the molimo from him and gently filled the forest with strange sounds—the rumblings and growls of buffalos and leopards, the mighty call of the elephant, the plaintive cooing of the dove. Interspersed were snatches of song, transformed by the trumpet into a sound quite unlike the song of men—richer, softer, more distant and unapproachable.

765 534 123 He continued blowing as we moved off, down the slope and to the bank of the river, but when we plunged into the water and waded across, the two trumpets left us and were carried upstream. [533] They growled and bellowed somewhere behind us as we made our 765 562 way along the path to the camp. In the clearing the men were standing up to see us arrive, and the women were hurrying about doing what they had to do before shutting themselves up in their huts. The [858] voice of the molimo had warned them that it was time to retire. The children had all been chased inside. One by one leaf doors were

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765 ceremonies of the local Negro tribes, nor did it follow any prescribed ritualistic details beyond a general over-all pattern. It was plain that [534] [708] the molimo trumpets were not considered as highly sacred objects in themselves; what was important, for some reason, was the sound [186] they produced. It was also very clear that the people of the forest wanted to be quite sure that the village world was well sealed off, because before the men gathered together that evening I found that the path leading out of the camp toward the village had been closed. A fallen branch and some logs had been dragged across it, shutting out the profane outside world.

The molimo of the Pygmies is not concerned with ritual or magic. In fact, it is so devoid of ritual, expressed either in action or words, that it is difficult to see what it *is* concerned with. Every day, around midday, a couple of youths would go around the camp, just as they had done this day, collecting offerings of food and firewood from hut to hut, for the molimo concerns everyone, and everyone must contribute. And each evening the women and children shut themselves up in their huts after the evening meal, for the molimo is mainly the concern of the men. And when the women have retired the men sit around the kumamolimo—the hearth of the molimo—and gaze into the molimo fire. Nearby a basket hangs, full of the offerings of food that will be eaten later. But first the men must sing, for this is the real work of the molimo, as they say; to eat and to sing, to eat and to sing. Yet behind these apparently simple outer trappings of the festival there was an atmosphere of almost overwhelming expectancy.

765 That first night, after I had eaten my meal, I went over to the 533 molimo fire, halfway between Manyalibo's hut and that of his daugh- 534 ter Kondabate and her husband Ausu, where the men were already gathering. I noticed that Amabosu, the singer, was not there. I knew why when, a few minutes after the singing had begun, I heard the voice of the molimo answering, way off by itself in the forest. It

no longer worried me that the trumpet was a metal drainpipe instead of a piece of bamboo or wood, because now that I could not see it I realized that Ausu was right. It was the sound that mattered. As the men sang in the camp, the voice of the molimo echoed their song, moving about continually so that it seemed to be everywhere at once. During a lull in the singing it started giving animal growls, and the men looked around to make sure that all the women were safely in their huts. Almost immediately Amabosu and Madyadya came running into the camp from the far end, past Cephu's camp, picking their feet up high in the air so that more than ever they seemed to be floating above the ground they trod. They came right up to the fire and squatted down either side of it, the front of the trumpet still held on Madyadya's shoulder as Amabosu warbled softly into the other end.

I noticed that the trumpet was still wet; it must have been given a "drink" just before it was carried into the camp. Now both youths stood up, and with Amabosu singing all the time, in reply to the song of the men, Madyadya took the end of the trumpet in his hands and waved it up and down, passing it through the flames of the molimo fire and over the heads of all of us sitting there. Some of the men took up hot ashes and rubbed them over the trumpet, and some even put live coals in at the far end. As Amabosu sang harder and louder, sparks flew out over Madyadya's shoulder, disappearing into the night with the song.

Then the two of them went dancing off, around the camp once and into the forest. There were a few last defiant bellows from the direction of the river, and no more was heard. The men stopped singing and prepared to eat. Two caldrons had been boiling over the fire, and both were now ready. One contained rice, the other a kind of spinach made from the leaves of the manioc plant. Eaten together they are delicious. I wondered if there would be any precedence as to who should eat first, or if there would be any ritual, but there

765 was neither. Everyone ate his fill as and when he pleased, a couple of
264 the older men saying they would wait until the youngsters had finished before they ate. But they did not wait for long. I was told, however, that everyone *had* to eat, just as no adult male was allowed to sleep but *had* to sing while molimo singing was in progress. Ap-
765 parently one of the greatest crimes that a Pygmy male can commit,
688 if not the greatest, is to be found asleep when the molimo is singing.
[536] One of the men stood up, and miming as all Pygmies love to do, he showed how they used to search for sleeping men, a spear under each arm, and how if they found one they would spear him in the stomach and kill him completely and for ever. I was told that then his body would be buried under the kumamolimo and nobody would be allowed to mention his death, even to remark on his absence. The
[825] women would be told that the molimo itself, the great animal of the forest, had carried off one of their number, but like the men they would ask no questions and would never again mention the missing man.

765 The molimo was often referred to as "the animal of the forest,"
825 and the women were supposed to believe that it really was an animal,
534 and that to see it would bring death. That of course is why they
562 were all bundled off to bed with the children before the trumpet was ever brought into camp. And even when it *was* brought in it was often shielded by a number of youths so that if any woman should happen to look, she would see nothing. The animal sounds it produced were certainly realistic, but I wondered what the women thought when it sang. What kind of animal was it that one moment could make such threatening sounds, and the next instant sing more beautifully than anything else in the whole forest?

765 I remembered again Ausu's saying that the only important thing
533 about the trumpet was the fact that it had a good voice and could
534 sing well. I was reminded of the Pygmy legend of the Bird with the
825 Most Beautiful Song. This bird was found by a young boy who

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would come from Cephu's camp, for the amount of interest that Cephu showed in the molimo was a topic for constant discussion and criticism. Masimongo, who had relatives in Cephu's camp, always upheld him when he did not appear himself or when his little group made a poor showing. But Manyalibo allowed no such excuses, and his voice carried much more weight. He said, good conservative that he was, that all men should take part in the molimo regardless of what camp they belonged to, if they were anywhere near at all. Then he went through the mime showing what would have happened in the old days, to anyone who did not attend and was found sleeping. I thought momentarily of Kenge.

But the molimo was not only a matter of singing late into the night. Each morning, too, there was activity, though of a different nature. The evenings were serious, the older men taking the lead in the singing and leaving the dancing largely to the younger men. Sometimes there was a lot of horseplay, but the older men, like Moke, kept an eye on what was going on and held the youngsters in check. Often the molimo fire was made into two fires, the older men sitting at one and the youngsters at the other, and then all the dancing went on at the youths' fire while the elders sat at theirs and just sang, and watched their sons with dreamy eyes.

But in the mornings the youths came into their own completely. Before the first glimmer of light filtered through into the camp, those of us who had managed to get to sleep were waked by a violent and raucous trumpeting from just outside the camp. This brought cries of protest from the older men. Some of them appeared sleepily at the entrance to their huts and shouted, "Animal! Go away and keep quiet and let me sleep!" but to no avail. From the far end of the camp, near the path leading to Cephu's clearing, a wild cavalcade of youths swept into view, shouting and yelling, clustered so thickly that it was impossible to see the trumpet they were carrying. But it was there, with Amabosu blowing it. It blasted and shrilled and

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765 growled and bellowed, and it rampaged around the camp, overturn-
882 ing any of the crude chairs that had been left outside, scattering the
534 remains of fires in all directions, and beating on the roofs of huts to
533 wake everyone up. Sometimes the youths seemed to divide at random into two sides and have a sort of tug of war with the trumpet, some trying to lead it in one direction, some in the other. It was not a real contest of strength, only acting. I wondered if perhaps this represented the original struggle for possession of the molimo, a struggle which some say was between Pygmies and animals, or others say was between men and women.

765 Ekianga took a prominent part in these morning affrays. He used
688 to lead the youths, always holding two spears, one under each arm,
536 pointing down at the ground as though he were looking for any sleeping person who should have been taking part in the activity. Sometimes he acted it out, stopping as though he saw an offender. Then he danced about and finally jabbed the spear blades at the earth.

765 I said to Kenge that this was what would happen to him if he
688 went off and took my bed and blanket again before the evening
183 singing had finished. Kenge laughed loudly and shouted across the
115 camp what I had said. But then he became serious and said that he
123 had been singing all the time until Moke had first said he wanted to go to sleep. "When the old men want to sleep it is all right for us to sleep," he said. Then he added laconically, "And of course if we are tired it is all right for us to go to sleep, naturally." He thought the conversation not very interesting, so he gave an animal call and ran with great leaps and bounds, like the antelope he was named for, across the camp to join in the tug of war.

765 If anyone had given offense the previous day, usually by being
598 too argumentative, the youths in the morning rampage paid particular attention to the offender's hut. Cephu's camp of course came in for the most attention, and although Cephu complained loudly

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expectancy. Every evening, when the women shut themselves up, pretending that they were afraid to see "the animal of the forest"; every evening, when the men gathered around the fire, pretending they thought that the women thought the drainpipes were animals; every evening, when the trumpet drainpipes imitated leopards and elephants and buffalos—every evening, when all this make-believe was going on, I felt that something very real and very great was going on beneath it, something that everyone else took for granted, and about which only I was ignorant.

It was as though the songs which lured the "animal" to the fireside also invoked some other kind of presence. As the evenings wore on toward morning, the songs got more and more serious, and the atmosphere not exactly tense but charged with an emotion powerful enough to send the dancers swirling through the molimo fire as though its flames and red-hot coals held no heat, as though the glowing embers were cold ashes. Yet there was nothing fanatic or frenzied about their action in dancing through the fire. Then there was always that point when the "animal" left the camp and returned to the forest, taking the presence with it. I could feel it departing as the mellow, wistful voice of the molimo got farther and farther away.

The morning rampages carried no such presence with them; they seemed more tangible both in actuality and in purpose. I learned that after these rampages the trumpets were brought back to the Lelo River, just above where the men bathed, and immersed there during the daytime so that the women would not see them. One day there was a terrible storm and the Lelo rose four or five feet, transformed into a torrent. When the rain abated in the late afternoon Madyadya went to look for the trumpets and found that one of them had been washed away. This caused tremendous hilarity, though of course everyone tried to disguise what they were talking about in front of the women. The women, playing the same game, pretended not to

know what was going on. Eventually the trumpet was found some distance downstream, full of sand and gravel and mud.

But that night, in spite of its prosaic experience, it was a mysterious thing again, alive and awe-inspiring and wonderfully beautiful; something that made the eyes of young and old alike light up with pleasure as they heard it sing. And, as always, there was that look in Amabosu's eyes as he worked his magic with the drainpipe. He was no longer Amabosu; he had some other personality totally different, and distant.

One day, when I was beginning to wonder if I would ever find out what it was all about, I was out with Kenge and his half-brother, Maipe. We had left at dawn, as we wanted to go to a distant part of the forest, about five hours' walk if one carried no load, and return by nightfall. About halfway there, far to the north of the Lelo and near the great falls of the Kare River, we stopped for a rest. We were in an *idu*, a small natural clearing used by the forest animals as a salt lick. For some reason we started talking about water and I asked again why the molimo trumpets always drank when they crossed a stream. Maipe, who seldom said much, said, as Ausu had, that they always gave wooden trumpets water to drink because it made them sound better. So, he said, it had become a custom and they still followed it even if the trumpet was metal. I then asked why the trumpets were kept in water and was again given a practical answer—it was the easiest place to hide them. I finally arrived at the question I had been leading up to—what happened to the molimo trumpets at the end of a festival? Did they go back to live in the water?

This struck both Maipe and Kenge as terribly funny. They said certainly not; if the trumpets were kept in the water always they would rot right away and everyone would be spending all their time making new ones instead of hunting. Without any further prompting

765 534 322 [824] they went on to tell me how the trumpets are normally made, from the young straight molimo tree, a tree with a soft center that can be bored out laboriously, using different vines and woods as drills, twisting them between the palms of the hands. It took a very long time, they said, but this was the real molimo, and its voice was the best of all. Njobo used to have such a trumpet, but it had rotted away, and now all he had was a short bamboo one.

765 534 422 Kenge told me that the trumpet which Masimongo owned had originally belonged to Kenge's father, Adenota, and by rights belonged to him. But he said he couldn't be bothered with it. "It costs too much, and it makes too much work. Always going around collecting food to feed everyone. . . ." He shook his head in disgust. He had given it to Masimongo when Masimongo married his sister. He could have it back if he wanted, or he could make another, but it was all really too much trouble.

765 534 123 [487] [139] Maipe said nothing, but after a while, when we were moving off, he asked me if I would like to see the sleeping place of a trumpet. He led me along an antelope trail, so low that I had to go almost on hands and knees. It followed the banks of a stream and the mongongo plants grew thickly. After a while the stream descended a slope in small cascades, and the undergrowth cleared. We stood up and saw that water was all around us, rippling over rocks and coming together at the bottom in a sizable pool. Maipe looked around, then walked surely into a patch of undergrowth and called me. I found him at the foot of a tall tree, the base of which was hidden by thick bush. Through the bush ran a vine, looped around the tree about three feet off the ground. Maipe said that any Pygmy seeing that would know that it marked the sleeping place of a molimo trumpet and would keep away, for it did not concern him and the molimo should not be disturbed while sleeping. I asked where the trumpet was, and Maipe pointed up above his head. I could see nothing except the immense branches of the tree spreading out high above,

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more than a hundred feet up. "That is where it sleeps," he said. "It is safe there. It sleeps there until it is needed."

I asked when it was needed, but Maipe had said all he was going to say. He looked up at the tree for a last time, then motioned with his head that we should be on our way. Kenge whispered to me that when we got back he would ask Moke to tell me more. It was better for old men to talk about these things.

That same night, just before the singing started, Moke was sitting outside his hut, whittling away at a new bow he was making, and talking to himself because there was nobody else for him to talk to. Kenge had spoken to him when we got back to the camp at dusk, but I did not expect anything to come of it, and Kenge had said nothing to me. Moke looked up and stared in my direction, then he looked back at his bow and continued whittling away with a rough stone. But he spoke a little louder, so that I would hear.

"Ebamunyama," he said, using the name I had been given, "*pi-ka'i to.*" ("Come here.")

He spoke as if he was addressing the bow, and when I got to him he still did not look up but just told me to sit down. Talking to the bow in his soft old voice, he said that he had been told I was asking about the molimo, and that this was a good thing and he would tell me whatever he could.

He went on to tell that the Pygmies call out their molimo whenever things seem to be going wrong. "It may be that the hunting is bad," he said, "or that someone is ill, or, as now, that someone has died. These are not good things, and we like things to be good. So we call out the molimo and it makes them good, as they should be."

Kind, quiet old Moke, all alone and without a wife to look after him, still working away at his bow, occasionally looking along the shank to make sure he was keeping the line true—he told me many things that evening. But, most important, he told me, or rather

much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest."

The complete faith of the Pygmies in the goodness of their forest world is perhaps best of all expressed in one of their great molimo songs, one of the songs that is sung fully only when someone has died. At no time do their songs ask for this or that to be done, for the hunt to be made better or for someone's illness to be cured; it is not necessary. All that is needful is to awaken the forest, and everything will come right. But suppose it does not, suppose that someone dies, then what? Then the men sit around their evening fire, as I had been doing with them for the past month, and they sing songs of devotion, songs of praise, to wake up the forest and rejoice it, to make it happy again. Of the disaster that has befallen them they sing, in this one great song, "There is darkness all around us; but if darkness *is*, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be good."

As Moke looked at me and spoke I wondered if this was how he had once explained things to his own son. Now I began to understand what happened at night when fifteen feet of drainpipe was carried into the camp and someone blew or sang into it; and I began to understand what the "presence" was—it was surely the presence of the Forest itself, in all its beauty and goodness.

Moke turned back to his bow and began whittling again.

"You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you. But you must stay awake—you may see them only once."

He started humming to himself, and I left.

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ever, thin and straight, with eyes still wide and unblinking and, it seemed, unseeing. She sat in the middle of the group, hugging her knees. Her skin sagged in withered folds, her bones stuck out in ugly lines and bumps. She made a strange contrast with the background of young feminine beauty and vitality. The only time she so much as moved was when Kondabate joined the group.

Kondabate, the belle with filed teeth and great diamond-shaped scarifications on her stomach; Kondabate the beauty, who after two years of married life still preserved her fine upstanding breasts and trim figure—but also Kondabate the childless. She had on a headdress like the old woman's, and her eyes, too, seemed unnaturally wide and staring. She was smiling and happy—until she sat down opposite the old lady. That was when the old woman moved, looking up from the fire into Kondabate's eyes. In an instant Kondabate seemed to lose her smile and her happiness. She became as empty as the withered old shell of a woman in front of her, and she sat as quietly, staring into the flickering flames.

After a while the men started singing again, but gently, and then with a shock I realized that the women were singing as well, the sacred songs of the molimo. And they were not just joining in, they were leading the singing. Songs that I had thought only the men knew and were allowed to sing—all of a sudden the women were showing that they not only knew them but could sing them with just as much intensity. Kondabate suddenly sprang up and seized the banja sticks from Kelemoke, and began beating the urgent molimo rhythm: *one* two, *one* two three, *one* two three. She beat the banja faster and faster, and I saw the old woman begin to twitch in every muscle. Kondabate was already half dancing, and it was as though she was passing the life and force from her body into the dried-up skinny old body in front of her. The old crone's legs started stamping up and down, and she sat back on her buttocks so that she could lift her feet higher. Then her arms began moving, pointing in

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ing us as gently as the breeze. When he had finished he stood by the fire and sang to the forest by himself, with the molimo answering from a great distance, getting fainter and fainter. Finally they were both singing so quietly that I could hardly distinguish their music from the music of the crickets and the frogs and the birds of the night. Somewhere a hyrax gave its throaty, rasping call of despair, and an owl hooted. Moke sat down, and nobody spoke, and nobody sang. Something wonderful had come into our lives and filled them with the magic of love and trust, and though we still possessed that love and trust, we regretted the going of the power that had brought it.

At dawn we were awakened as usual by the sound of the two trumpets. But there was a quality about their tone that was harsh and brash. We all knew that the real molimo had gone, but we had to go through with the final ritual for the benefit of the villagers. The bellowings did not last long, and soon the trumpets disappeared in the direction of the village with a bunch of noisy youths in attendance. Later, when the main body of the camp was packed up and ready to leave, one of the youths came running back and told us with great excitement what fun they had had frightening the villagers with the molimo, but that now it was safely hidden in the forest, on the outskirts of the village.

We got a warm reception as we emerged from the plantations among the neat rows of mud houses. The villagers eyed the baskets on the women's backs and tried to estimate how much meat they were bringing. They called out offers of free meals in an attempt to bribe their way into the favor of people whom they theoretically regarded as slaves. As we filed from the leafy plantation, leaving the forest behind us, we left a kind and friendly world and entered a different one. Here, if the world was open to the sky it was also open to greed and suspicion and treachery. Village women attached themselves to "their" Pygmies and tried to pry into the baskets

MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH

The evening meal was a good one, as the Pygmies had brought in far more meat than they allowed to the villagers, and in return for what they had given away they had received generous portions of rice, beans, groundnuts and manioc, and a few of the tiny bitter tomatoes which blend so well with manioc leaves and groundnuts in the making of a sauce. When it was dark, the women and children retired almost immediately, and the men gathered at the central fire where four upright poles indicated the Pygmy version of a *baraza*, or men's meeting place. At first, several villagers came to see what was going on, and the Pygmies sang and danced for them. They sang and danced until the villagers, tired after a heavy day's work in the plantations, went to bed. Then the men really began to sing. They sang and sang until it seemed almost as though we were back in the forest. But any time there was a strange sound, and it was suspected that there might be a villager lurking about, they stopped. They had guards posted all around to make sure they were not caught unawares.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning when the molimo made its appearance. It came into the camp preceded by two youths holding glowing firebrands in their hands. Waving the brands high in the air, then swinging them down to touch the ground, they laid a fiery path for the molimo to follow. It was stately and imposing. Following this path of glowing cinders the molimo circled the village several times and then came to rest by the fire, where it sang very quietly. Just as I wondered if it was really going to sing as it did in the forest it moved off, and the tempo increased. Surrounded now by all the youths, the molimo started running around, faster and faster, making lightning swoops on the group of older men who were sitting by the fire. The rest of the men were either dancing in a frenzy around the fire itself, as if protecting it, or else they were with the molimo. I heard a crunching sound as the molimo plowed through a small field of sugar cane at the edge of the vil-

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765 lage, and I heard leaves being ripped off roofs and the dried mud
534 beaten from walls.

765 There was a subtle change of atmosphere, and a tremendous air
533 of expectancy. By their insistent singing the older men seemed to
781 be trying to avert some disaster, as did the youths by their danc-
513 ing. Moke allowed nobody to sleep or rest except for a very brief spell when he kept half a dozen men singing while the others dozed as best they could around the fire. Then he woke us up and goaded us all into singing harder than ever. The molimo had left and was evidently playing havoc in the Negro village. But as we sang it came sweeping back into the camp from behind Ekianga's house.

765 The two fire-dancers in front sent showers of sparks up into the air
781 and onto the ground. The molimo made straight for the central fire.
535 It knocked us aside—even old Tungana—and slowly and deliber-
534 ately it trampled through the fire, scattering it to all sides.
372

The men who had been sitting were on their feet at once, and hurriedly threw the scattered logs back into the center and joined the dancers in bringing life back to the fire. But the molimo was insistent, and the next time all the men joined with it. Reluctantly at first, then sharing the inevitability of the occasion they too danced and stamped among the flaming logs until there was nothing left but glowing coals. As the pace of the dance increased, the embers were scattered wider and wider, until the whole of the village seemed to be carpeted with winking red eyes. The molimo was once again blowing martial blasts, and the men accompanied it with a deep, rhythmic chant. All except a few of the elders followed it on its last tour of the camp, slow and majestic, tramping out the fire of life until there was only one glowing ember left. I saw Moke sadly sit down on the ground beside it, pick it up in his hands and fondle it.

276 He took a cigarette butt from behind his ear and lighted it with the coal. He put the coal carefully back on the ground, stood up and stepped on it until it too was extinguished. Then he turned his back on us all and disappeared into his hut.

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on us all and disappeared into his hut. The molimo, surrounded by a triumphant entourage, now left the village, and we escorted it back to the forest. Dawn was breaking, streaking the sky with gold and crimson, and as soon as we had found a suitable temporary hiding place we returned to the village.

It was in a dreadful state of chaos. Black ashes and cinders covered the ground everywhere; manioc plants were uprooted, sugar cane trampled down, chairs smashed, leaves torn off roofs and the mud from many walls crumbled on the ground. The Negro villagers were full of complaints, but in the Pygmy village men and women were silent, sleepily clearing up the wreckage and preparing for the midday feast. Nobles and headmen began arriving from neighboring villages, and as even the four poles that represented the Pygmy baraza had been smashed to the ground, they took possession of my veranda. They had come to supervise the ritual feast which, according to their custom, marked the end of the mourning ceremonies for Balekimito. They were a little surprised to find that the elima occupied the house in which Balekimito had died, but the Pygmies were in no mood to argue. They just shrugged their shoulders and said it was a good house. As far as they were concerned they had finished mourning their personal loss as soon as their mother had been buried. From then onward they had been fulfilling their duty to the forest by rejoicing with the molimo for the long and good life that had been granted to the old lady. They had acknowledged the gift of the fire of life from the forest, and the forest's right and power to withdraw it; they had acknowledged and accepted the facts of life and death as both being, equally, the gift of their god.

But if the villagers wanted them to have a formal feast to end the mourning, and were willing to give the food, they did not object.

The food was cooked and laid out in the center of my veranda, which when the sun was high was the only cool and shady place in the village. This meant that the villagers were pushed to the edge as

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made his way painfully to join the other boys, all sitting in a line on logs. Immediately after being cut they are made to sit down and join the others in singing one of the many work songs they will have to learn during the coming months. This takes their mind off the pain, which is all the more considerable because after the operation the wound is wrapped in a leaf containing a native medicine that is full of salt. Kaoya was very roughly handled, and Masalito ran up to him and put his arms around him, hugging him tight to give him strength. The villagers howled with laughter, but Masalito was more concerned with Kaoyo than with them.

Not long afterward the boys were made to dance, and then put to rest on a special bed made of split logs, laid side by side on a rough frame that kept them two feet or so off the ground. The boys lay face downward along the length of the logs, their heads resting on pillows made of plantain leaves. Over the bed there was a rough shelter, sloping down to the ground behind, but open all along the front and on two sides. From the roof was hung a sacred banana, which initiates and instructors would set swinging as an understood command for the boys to start singing. The boys were forbidden to touch the banana, being told they would die if they did.

There were all sorts of other taboos, or restrictions. To get wet, particularly by being outside when it rained, was sure to bring death. To eat certain foods was strictly prohibited. The boys had to eat without using their hands directly, spearing the food with sticks. They were forbidden to eat with their initiated relatives. The sound of the bull-roarer, a piece of wood that makes a strange whirring noise when spun around on the end of a cord, was meant to be the voice of a forest demon, and the boys had to show due respect and terror when they heard it.

During the daytime, when the villagers were present, either as instructors or just as visitors, the boys adhered faithfully to all these and many other rules. By their own rules, however, the villagers were

while the men pretended to be honey gatherers, dancing in a long curling line through the camp, looking up with exaggerated gestures as if searching for some sign of bees, the women danced in another long line through the trees at the edge of the camp, pretending they were the bees. The two lines gradually came closer and closer together, the women singing in a soft, rhythmic buzz, buzz, buzz, while the men pretended to hear but still not to see them. Then the women seized burning logs of wood and attacked the men, tapping the logs on their heads so that a shower of sparks fell over them, stinging them like the sting of the honeybee. At that they all gathered up the embers, and where some of the younger men had been building an elaborate hearth of special woods and special leaves, moistened to just the right extent, they lit the great honey fire. There was no flame, but dense clouds of smoke billowed upward. Men blew on their honey whistles, women clapped their hands, and everyone burst into the song of magic that would travel with the smoke and call the bees to come and make more honey.

On such occasions I found that Masisi and Cephu made their appearance more and more often, paving the way for a reunion at the next camp. When the time came for me to leave all animosities had been forgotten.

One day Kenge had gone off on some unknown mission and I decided to make a final pilgrimage to Apa Lelo, where the cycle had begun. This day of all days I wanted to be by myself, but there is something about the forest, not exactly threatening, but challenging, that dares you to travel alone. I had to refuse several Pygmies who wanted to come with me, and once I was well away I was glad. I knew what the challenge was, for to be alone was as though you were daring to look on the face of the great God of the Forest himself, so overpowering was the goodness and beauty of the world all around. Every trembling leaf, every weathered stone, every cry of an animal